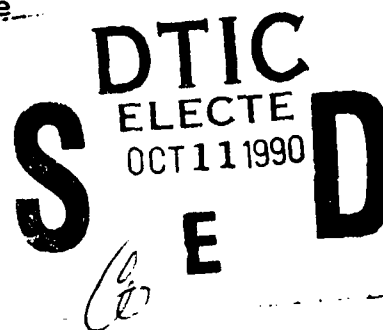


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THE ARMY AND THE STRATEGIC MILITARY LEGACY OF VIETNAM

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE



by

MICHAEL J. BRADY, MAJ, USA  
B.A., University of Delaware, 1974  
M.S., Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, 1985

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1990

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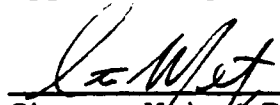
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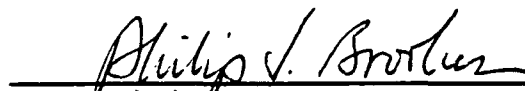
Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Thesis Committee Chairman  
Steven Metz, Ph.D.

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Member, Graduate Faculty  
LTC Lee D. Veltum

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Member, Graduate Faculty  
LTC Peter F. Leahy

Accepted this 1st day of June 1990 by:

  
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (Reference to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

THE ARMY AND THE STRATEGIC MILITARY LEGACY OF VIETNAM,  
by Major Michael J. Brady, USA, 322 pages.

This study analyzes how the U.S. Army has assimilated the Vietnam War's strategic military legacy. The investigation looks at the body of Vietnam "lessons" literature and the schools of thought regarding Vietnam's legacy. An examination of three institutional criteria discerns the Army's interpretation of Vietnam's strategic legacy. They are: professional journals, Army doctrine, and service school curricula. The investigation also employs a survey instrument to ascertain how the post-Vietnam generation of officers perceives Vietnam's legacy in relation to the existing schools of thought.

Among the many conclusions which could be drawn from this investigation are: the Army has yet to define for itself what its Vietnam experience means in strategic terms. The Army consciously avoided a frank, comprehensive strategic reappraisal of its efforts in Indochina in the interest of returning to an exclusive focus on its central European mission. This strategic reorientation gave the Army a new sense of purpose and *raison d'être*. However, it consciously and continually deflected the Army's attention away from a comprehensive analysis of the Vietnam War which addressed North Vietnamese strategy.

The study concludes that no comprehensive postwar strategic assessment of Vietnam exists bearing the Army's *imprimatur*. Its absence constrains the Army's ability to conceptually address future Third World conflicts which employ revolutionary warfare to achieve their ends.



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The staff of the Combined Arms Research Library at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College greatly assisted me in finding materials. They also saved countless hours of dead-end research efforts by steering me in the right direction.

Finally, but most importantly, this thesis could not have been accomplished without the support of my wife, Julie, and daughter, Molly.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to the generation of U.S. Army officers who fought the Vietnam War at the platoon, company, and battalion level. Also, to the members of the same generation who came home from Vietnam to a divided America and a damaged Army. They bore the workman's task of rebuilding the U.S. Army into the formidable and robust force that it is today. May future generations of Army officers understand your contributions, both in Vietnam and after, by an Army-Vietnam legacy.

Finally, to the members of Staff Group 19D, Command and General Staff College, Academic Year 1989-1990, for having patiently suffered numerous artillery and revolutionary war vignettes.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Even Americans supportive of U.S. intervention in Panama are anxious to know how long U.S. troops will be there. It is only natural given the previous interventions and the memories of involvement in the Vietnam conflict. Many Americans want this mission to be successful and quick.

"The Next Phase"  
Editorial, Kansas City Times  
December 22, 1989

The newspapers in mid-America, fifteen years after the fall of Saigon, looked back across the years to the uncertain legacy of the Vietnam War. In an effort to interpret the present, Vietnam's legacy meant the ability to claim quick success.

At the very first news conferences on Panama, the press corps' initial and recurring questions related to how long American troops would remain in Panama. While asking these questions, Manuel Noriega continued to elude American troops.<sup>1</sup> Nationally prominent news commentators posed the same question to the "experts" who appeared on the news

programs during the coverage of the U.S. intervention in Panama.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Kansas City Times editorial equates "legacy" to success and the length of commitment. The more fundamental question on what type of war to fight, and the appropriate means employed to achieve success, did not get asked. These latter questions go to the heart of the controversy over Vietnam's legacy. The exact nature of the "legacy" of Vietnam defies definition. Although quick success may prove to be the operative lesson for Panama, the jury has yet to render a verdict on Vietnam's "lessons." For every assertion that this or that lesson learned from the American experience in Vietnam has merit, a counter argument can be made.

"Quickness" in the Vietnam context means measuring U.S. troop commitment against an eight year time span (1965-1973). In Panama, reporters' constant questions produced an artificial pressure on U.S. and Panamanian officials to accede to premature time lines.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps what should have been kept in mind was David Fromkin's and James Chace's conclusion to their 1985 article in Foreign Affairs: "... the Indochina experience is, at best, of limited use to the United States in building a contemporary consensus on the central issue--whether or not to intervene abroad with military force."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps "how" and "under what

self-imposed time constraints" should be driven by the dynamics of the situation, not a perceived Vietnam "lesson."

However, let's step back from Panama to investigate what strategic-military lessons the Army has taken from Vietnam. In defining and shaping the Army's strategic assessment, imperatives about "quickness" and "success" must be judged in the overall context of Vietnam experience.

The Kansas City Times editorial is not an isolated example of the invocation of Vietnam's legacy. The length of military commitment ("quickness") represents a recurring theme since Vietnam. The current Speaker of the House of Representatives, Thomas S. Foley, led a congressional delegation to Grenada in 1983 just after the American invasion. He reported that American troops might be needed to stay in Grenada until well into 1984.<sup>5</sup> In response, General John W. Vessey, Jr. said he hoped U.S. forces would be withdrawn from Grenada by Thanksgiving, one month after the invasion.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond overt military intervention, the Vietnam "legacy" has figured prominently in policy debates over El Salvador. While a graduate student at Georgetown University, I noticed bumper stickers manufactured and placed on cars in the Washington area that read, "El Salvador is Spanish for Vietnam."

Beyond the bumper sticker mentality, policy debates on U.S. policy and assistance to El Salvador often invite the Vietnam analogy. For example, opposing "Op-Ed" pieces in the New York Times once drew and then denied "El Salvador's parallels to Vietnam... [that are] so startlingly exact that the [Reagan] Administration is foolish to deny them."<sup>7</sup> Writing this in 1983, Stephen B. Young, a former Vietnam Civil Operations Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) official, asserted that from 1960-1967 the U.S. had no comprehensive strategy for victory. Further, he argued that striking similarities between inaccessible insurgent jungle bases, foreign weapons, and sanctuaries characterized both past (Vietnam) and present (El Salvador).<sup>8</sup>

Ronald Steele, an author, took issue with Young's view by countering with the statement, "El Salvador Isn't Vietnam."<sup>9</sup> Steele debated the very nature of the war, not finding it to be a full scale civil war, like that in Vietnam, but more akin to a classic Latin American insurrection, pitting peasants against soldiers.<sup>10</sup> Unlike Vietnam, Steele continued, the insurgents are not Viet Cong, but are weak and isolated. El Salvador doesn't have a friendly giant next door like China that had acted as a restraining influence on the U.S.<sup>11</sup>

The assertion of these and similar "lessons" is not uncommon. Therefore, a conscious recognition of the

influence and application of Vietnam's strategic-military lessons is important. The U.S. Army has a responsibility to advise the U.S. national leadership on the appropriate use and efficacy of military force (means) to effect national policy and its objectives (ends). The deliberate and continuing injection of Vietnam's legacy into this delicate and sensitive process will influence what form and substance this advice takes. Therefore, current and future Army leaders must have the tools to critically discern what Indochina means about the viability of military force in Vietnam-like situations. As we can see from the preceding pages, this comparison (and attendant judgments) forces itself into the very core of the Army's responsibility--when, how, and under what circumstances to recommend the employment of military means to our national policy makers.

As we will see shortly, the postwar debate has left fundamental issues undecided, such as the nature of the war fought (conventional or revolutionary). Based on its determination of the war's nature, the Army must select and recommend the appropriate means to prosecute it. To quote Karl von Clausewitz:

"The first, the supreme, the most far reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish... the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive."<sup>12</sup>

Criticism on how the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) offered advice to national policy makers during the war flows from this dictum. Law establishes the JCS as the principal military advisors to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council. Congress charges this corporate body with statutory obligations entailing strategic planning and strategic direction of the armed forces. One of the most serious postwar indictments of the JCS's statutory responsibilities comes from retired U.S. Army General Bruce Palmer. He has concluded that the JCS proved incapable of articulating an effective military strategy.<sup>13</sup>

The principal responsibility for sorting out the Vietnam experience and its implications will devolve upon the Army. The Army shouldered the primary responsibility for security assistance, advisory efforts, and for the South Vietnamese Army's birth and training from 1950 to 1964. From 1965 to 1973, the commitment of U.S. forces saw the United States bear the major responsibility for prosecuting the ground war in South Vietnam. In a recent policy statement by the U.S. Army Chief of Staff entitled, The United States Army: A Strategic Force For The 1990s And Beyond, General Carl E. Vuono wrote:

A growing challenge to U.S. interests and national security strategy is so-called low-intensity conflict.... Low-intensity conflict can undermine important allies and other friendly nations, impede the development of democratic institutions, and hamper essential U.S. economic and military ties.... Clearly, low-intensity conflict is the security challenge most likely to demand a U.S. military response with little or no warning.

Therefore, how the Army as an institution has come to terms or not come to terms with Vietnam, is of profound importance. Army officers must properly advise the U.S. leadership in the pursuit of national policy and objectives. Professor Russell F. Weigley, in his critique of Harry G. Summers' On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War chides U.S. military men for preparing to re-fight the last war. He even goes further by carefully couching his criticism by saying the military prepares to fight the last **satisfactory war**.<sup>14</sup> Since Vietnam was far from being a **satisfactory last war** for the U.S. Army, how it has faced up to the Vietnam experience certainly merits examination.

As the Vietnam experience passes from the Army's "first-hand" institutional memory, future Army leaders will increasingly have to rely on the Vietnam "lessons literature." Future Army leaders will not have the benefit of ground combat experience in Vietnam. Nor do they possess policy formulation and implementation backgrounds at the higher levels of government. These future generations of

military officers will have the "lessons" of Vietnam thrust upon them in future crises. These alleged "lessons" may come from any quarter. As we have already seen, the press, via its editorials and questions to national policy makers, draws the Vietnam connection quite easily. The very nature of their questions betray what their particular view of "Vietnam's legacy" should mean. Also, members of other executive departments (e.g. The State Department, Central Intelligence Agency) may assert their views at those future inter-agency processes that shape the policy process during time of crisis.

Consider, for example, the following either/or choice being urged upon the future generation of U.S. military leaders by the following assessment offered by Harry G. Summers:

... Like the alien monster in "Poltergeist II," the academic gurus of guerrilla war have returned. Now they're selling low-intensity conflict instead of counter-insurgency as the wave of the future, but changing the name does not make their wrong-headed theories any less dangerous to American security.

Several factors have allowed them to spawn. First, they take advantage of the fact that few serving military officers or NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) have firsthand knowledge of the realities of the Vietnam War. They can therefore create a phony "Vietnam War" that supports their theories and foist it off as the real thing.<sup>15</sup>



Summers' exhortation represents one of the potential dilemmas facing future military leaders: Did the Army fail in Vietnam due to "wrong-headed" theories about counter-insurgency, or would a conventionally prosecuted effort have achieved victory? The ability of future Army leaders to critically sort this out in time of crisis will shape the "means" they recommend. These "means" must correspond to our national civilian leadership's stated "ends." Before some future crisis forces the issue on "lessons," future Army leaders must either have, or develop, sufficient intellectual capital to discern what recommendations to address to our national policy makers.

Stanley Karnow, in his book, Vietnam: A History, labels the post-Vietnam appraisals of lessons learned as "litanies of 'what-might-have-beens'" and calls the search for lessons "autopsies [that] are academic exercises, like wargames."<sup>16</sup> However, a searching examination for the Army's perception of the Vietnam strategic-military legacy should not be put off so easily. This proves especially true when Vietnam gets offered as proof positive for adopting or rejecting this policy or that strategy. The question of legacy represents much more than an idle, academic exercise. An answer will take you through an assessment of the national policy objectives and attendant military strategies for Vietnam. As the United States' last

experience with war, any such assessment will profoundly influence the attitudes that national policy makers and future Army leaders will carry with them as "baggage" into future crises. As Robert Jervis has written, "The only thing as important for a nation as its revolution is its last major war."<sup>17</sup> In his book, The Lessons of the Past, Ernest R. May argues forcefully that men and women (in government) making decisions under conditions of high uncertainty necessarily envision the future partly in terms of what they believe to have happened in the past.<sup>18</sup>

#### **PURPOSE OF THESIS**

Given all this, my aim will be to examine Vietnam's "strategic legacy" for the U.S. Army. Also, I will explore how Vietnam's legacy influences the formulation of U.S. Army strategy for dealing with future, Third World, low-intensity conflicts. This will be important, especially given the context of revolutionary changes in East-West relations and the U.S. intervention in Panama.

In particular, the goal is to examine the intellectual "state of the art" of the Vietnam "lessons learned." The approach will be to lay out what the U.S. Army has taken from its Vietnam experience and seems to be passing on to its "successor generation." Consensus, lack of consensus,

or "conventional wisdom" will be searched for. With the "lesson baggage" laid out in the open, officers of the post-Vietnam generation can consciously identify which "Vietnam imperatives" thrust upon them should be applied or should be discarded as irrelevant.

In sum, the thesis will attempt to discover the Army's conventional wisdom on the strategic-military lessons of Vietnam. I will attempt to identify the components of the conventional wisdom, pointing out converging and diverging points of view. The Army's "conventional wisdom" has never been identified as a corporate body and broken into components or differing schools of thought.

#### **BACKGROUND**

An explanation of how this thesis emerged will help readers understand my particular concern with Vietnam's strategic-military legacy. My interest began as long ago as 1984 as a student at the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. I heard my fellow students offer what they thought to be the "lessons" of Vietnam for U.S. foreign policy. More recently, as a student at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), this occurred again. A core curriculum CGSC course required students to design and brief campaign plans for Central America.

I listened to my contemporaries voice what they perceived to be the "lessons" of Vietnam in relation to the development of campaign plans. These assertions, in turn, sparked an interest in trying to define exactly what legacy the U.S. Army had taken from the Vietnam War.

I first found that one could literally drown in all the material that has been written about the Vietnam War. Secondly, I discovered that the members of the post-Vietnam officer corps, with a few exceptions, have not devoted their scholarship or attention to Vietnam. Thoughtful, extended reflections or analyses on the "lessons" of Vietnam, by Army officers who came on active duty after 1973, have been few and far between.

The "exceptions" to this general finding are (Major) Andrew Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam, (Major) Mark Clodfelter's The Limits of Air Power, and (Major) David Petraeus' doctoral dissertation entitled "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam: A Study of Military Influence and the Use of Force in the Post-Vietnam Era."<sup>19</sup> No military scholarship has systematically focused on Vietnam's influence on the U.S. military decision making until 1987. Major Dave Petraeus, gives substance to what has been anecdotally spoken of for some time. Petraeus documents a post-Vietnam senior military leadership quite circumspect in their approach to the use of force.<sup>20</sup>

Since Petraeus' doctoral dissertation fully addresses the effects of Vietnam's legacy on the current military leadership, the logical task for my study would be to analyze how Vietnam influences the post-Vietnam generation of officers. To do so, I would have to look inside the Army to find how it has laid out its institutional wisdom.

Grenada and Panama are within the post-Vietnam generation's experience. However, their extremely brief duration and relative limited troop involvement distinguish them from the more widely shared experience of senior officers in Vietnam. Even the experience of the generation of officers who fought in Vietnam can serve to distort this loosely termed "common experience." Officers still on active duty after the Vietnam War experienced a "short tour" policy, served at relatively junior ranks, and returned for multiple tours. As a consequence, the senior officers with Vietnam experience may have something far removed from a common experience.

The CGSC instructor who currently teaches the Vietnam elective illustrated this very point. He told the students of his two tour experiences in Vietnam during the 1968 TET offensive and again during the 1972 "Easter Offensive." His experiences left him with the impression of having served in two different wars; the first being a fight

against the Viet Cong guerrillas, the second being more of a conventional fight against North Vietnamese Army regular units. Harry G. Summers reminds us of this phenomenon by quoting Clausewitz's warning against the "vividness of transient impressions."<sup>21</sup>

### RESEARCH QUESTION

In my attempt to assess the influence of Vietnam on the U.S. Army, I sought to answer the following research question: What is Vietnam's "strategic legacy" for the U.S. Army, and how will it influence U.S. Army strategy for dealing with future Third World, low-intensity conflict?

This implies several answers to subordinate research questions:

1. What are the strategic-military lessons of Vietnam for the U.S. Army?
2. Who and what are the sources of these lessons, and what are their points of convergence and divergence?
3. There are popular "schools of thought" as to the strategic lessons of Vietnam, but are there opposing points of view which leave less "clear-cut" assessments for future military leaders?

- a. Harry G. Summers, Jr.'s, On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War, Bruce Palmer's The

25-Year War, Dave Richard Palmer's The Summons of the Trumpet, and Andrew F. Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam present popular assessments of the strategic lessons of the Vietnam War--what analyses do they present of strategic-military lessons?

b. What are the key strategic lessons presented by Summers, the Palmers, Krepinevich? How do they differ? What is the significance of their differences?

4. What does a review of post-Vietnam and current U.S. Army doctrinal literature, professional military journals, and service school curricula reveal about the lessons taken from Vietnam?

5. Is there a conventional "institutional" wisdom within the Army as to the strategic military lessons of Vietnam?

6. What will be the institutional effect of generational transition within the officer corps on the U.S. Army's understanding of Vietnam? How does the post-Vietnam U.S. Army officer generation subscribe to the schools of thought offered.

## ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions have been adopted for this thesis. In some cases the assumptions, explicitly stated, are supported by further explanation. In other cases, the assumptions stated are intuitively obvious and require no further qualification. For the purposes of definition, an assumption will be defined as something which cannot be presently verified as fact. Assumptions are crucial for answering the research questions.

1. Vietnam has a "strategic legacy." Although this assumption seems too obvious to require stating, it must be kept in mind that there is some scholarship that attempts to deny the applicability of "lessons" from Vietnam. For example, James Thompson almost sarcastically concludes that the "central lesson" to be learned is that we should never again "take on the job of trying to defeat a nationalist, anti-colonial movement under indigenous communist control in former French Indochina." This lesson, Thompson concludes, proves to be "of less than universal relevance."<sup>22</sup> This relates directly to the following stated assumption.

2. Vietnam's strategic legacy will consciously or unconsciously exert an influence on U.S. national military strategy much in the same way as Munich, Berlin, the "loss" of China, and the Korean War have. This assumption is based



on the factual arguments and documentation already presented by Ernest R. May, "Lessons" of the Past, Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, Thinking in Time, and David Howell Petraeus, "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam."<sup>23</sup>

3. Strategic-military lessons have developed from the Vietnam War and have coalesced more or less into a body of conventional wisdom that have been unconsciously or consciously adopted by the Army. This conventional wisdom is relative in the sense that although there is a set of beliefs or conclusions as to the lessons of Vietnam, there still exist substantial difference of opinion and differing schools of thought.

4. Works by serving and former military officers will be read by younger officers before civilian works published on Vietnam. Summers' On Strategy, Krepinevich's The Army in Vietnam, General Bruce Palmer's The 25-Year War, David R. Palmer's The Summons of the Trumpet, William Westmoreland's A Soldier Reports, and Kinnard's The War Managers exert an influence on the U.S. Army officer corps when trying to understand what Vietnam has to teach. This assumption, written before using the survey instrument later described in Chapter Three, "Methodology," has been borne out by the survey's findings.

5. The Army's "conventional wisdom" on the Vietnam War manifests itself through the required instruction and readings at intermediate and senior level service schools, professional military journals, doctrinal publications (e.g. field manuals), and the commercial publications of military officers.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of my investigation, I will define "legacy" as any set of interrelated assumptions, beliefs, or understandings about a past event (in this case Vietnam) which consciously or unconsciously influences decisions made in the present. In a similar manner, I will define "lessons" as value judgements made about the efficacy of some past policy or strategy. "Lessons" may be consciously or unconsciously applied or rejected for application when making decisions or judgments in the present. Present circumstances may or may not approximate the actual conditions under which the "lessons" were derived.

I will rely on JCS Publication 1, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (1 June 1987) and Field Manual (FM) 100-20/Air Force Manual (AFM) 2-20, Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict (Approved Final Draft, 1989) for the definitions of the following key terms:<sup>24</sup>

(1) **National Policy.** A broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives (JCS Pub 1).

(2) **National Objectives.** Those fundamental aims, goals, or purposes of a nation--as opposed to the means for seeking these ends--toward which a policy is directed and efforts and resources of the nation are applied (JCS Pub 1).

(3) **Strategy.** The art and science of developing and using political, economic, psychological, and military forces as necessary during peace and war, to afford the maximum support to policies, in order to increase the probabilities and favorable consequences of victory and to lessen the chances of defeat (JCS Pub 1).

a. **National Strategy.** The art and science of developing and using the political, economic, and psychological powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war, to secure national objectives (JCS Pub 1).

b. **Military Strategy.** The art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force or threat of force (JCS Pub 1).

(4) **Mid-Intensity Conflict.** War between two or more nations and their respective allies, if any, in which the

belligerents employ the most modern technology and all resources in intelligence; mobility; fire power (excluding nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons); command, control, and communications; and service support for limited objectives under definitive policy limitations as to the extent of destructive power that can be employed or the extent of geographic area that might be involved (JCS Pub 1).

(5) **Low-Intensity Conflict.** Politico-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low-intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low-intensity conflicts are often localized, generally in the Third World, but contain regional and global security implications (FM 100-20/AFM 2-20).

(6) **Insurgency.** An organized, armed political struggle whose goal may be the seizure of power through revolutionary takeover and replacement of the existing government. In some cases, however, an insurgency's goals may be more limited. For example, the insurgency may intend to break away from government control and establish an autonomous

state within traditional ethnic or religious territorial bounds. The insurgency may also intend to extract limited political concessions through less violent means (FM 100-20/AFM 2-20).

(7) **Counter-Insurgency.** Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency (JCS Pub 1 and FM 100-20).

(8) **Guerrilla Warfare.** Military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces (FM 100-20/AFM 2-20).

(9) **Counter-Guerrilla Warfare.** Operations and activities conducted by armed forces, paramilitary forces, or non-military agencies against guerrillas (JCS Pub 1).

(10) **Foreign Internal Defense (FID).** Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency (JCS Pub 1/FM 100-20/AFM 2-20).

(11) **Security Assistance.** Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and

other defense-related services, by grant, credit, or cash sales, in furtherance of national policies and objectives (JCS Pub 1/FM 100-20/AFM 2-20).

The following definition of revolutionary war will be adopted from Phillip B. Davidson's Vietnam at War (1988): **Revolutionary war** is waged to gain political control within a state. Revolutionary war is total war which attempts to mobilize and involve all the people to support its cause and employs every available instrument of power--military, political, diplomatic, economic, demographic, and psychological. Revolutionary war is waged with unity of effort, stresses ambiguity to confuse the enemy, is protracted. Revolutionary war changes or synthesizes the means (military, political, economic, diplomatic, etc.) employed to gain control of the state in relation to the means its enemy adopts to defeat it.<sup>25</sup>

I have chosen to define revolutionary war due to its easy confusion with guerrilla warfare or low-intensity conflict. The concept of revolutionary war derives from Mao-Tse-Tung's collection of lectures written during the Chinese Revolution during the 1930s. Mao later published these lectures at Peking in 1954 under the title On Protracted War.<sup>26</sup> Mao did not conceive of guerrilla operations as an independent form of warfare, but simply as one aspect of the revolutionary struggle.<sup>27</sup> Guerrilla war

represents one of many means to an end and not as an end in itself. U.S. doctrine's definition of "insurgency" as defined above, encompasses the concept of revolutionary war. The doctrinal definition broadens the traditional concept of revolutionary war which can be employed not only to gain total political control within a state, but also to achieve more limited goals.

### **LIMITATIONS**

The inherent limitation I foresee will be defining, giving substance to, and defending what constitutes the current "conventional wisdom" concerning the military-strategic lessons of the Vietnam War. Several factors force this limitation upon my investigation.

First, the voluminous amount of material already published on the "lessons" of Vietnam defies the neat categorization and orderly classification of "lessons." Second, the U.S. Army or Department of Defense has not published what it considers to be the operative "lessons" of Vietnam for formal instruction in the service school environment. Third, there exists no formal pronouncements or policy statements by the Department of the Army nor the Department of Defense on the "lessons" of Vietnam.

Hence the need in the foregoing "assumptions" section and the need to employ the term "conventional wisdom" with an initial loose definition so that my investigation might proceed.

#### **DELIMITATIONS**

My investigation will not produce a history of the Vietnam War. Nor will it attempt to chronicle tactical or operational lessons of the war. The study and research will restrict itself to an identification and examination of the Army's strategic-military lessons of the Vietnam conflict.

In order to define the strategic-military lessons, some degree of national policy and objectives "lessons learned" must be reviewed so that the military "lessons learned" discussed will be understood. However, this context will be brief. This thesis will not pass judgment on the validity of this or that lesson offered in critique of U.S. national policy or objectives during the Vietnam War.

The following chapters will not attempt to chronicle, critique, or synthesize everything written on the strategic-military lessons of the Vietnam War. Such a task is well beyond my resources. Furthermore, such an approach goes well beyond my stated purpose and would only serve to



blur rather than sharpen the lines I will attempt to draw in defining what has been termed the "conventional wisdom" adopted or shunned by the Army.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The generation of officers without Vietnam experience, now passing through the middle management levels of the Army, must have a source from which to measure the conventional wisdom being offered on the strategic-military lessons of the Vietnam War. Future military leaders will have to exercise critical thinking abilities when having the lessons of Vietnam thrust upon them in the midst of a crisis whose circumstances may approximate, or may not even resemble, the Vietnam experience.

As the Vietnam War begins to pass out of the military's personal institutional memory by way of generational change, what future leaders study and read during the course of their formal military education will become extremely influential. The institutionalization of the strategic-military lessons of the Vietnam War will introduce considerable influence inhibiting new or fresh views that would challenge the conventional wisdom.

For example, consider the current conventional wisdom challenged by Krepinevich in his book The Army and

Vietnam. Krepinevich drew considerable fire from no less than a former Acting Chief of Staff of the Army, General Bruce Palmer, in the top Army professional journal,

Parameters: The Journal of The U.S. Army War College.

Palmer slashed Krepinevich's analyses as "abrasive...

[filled with] crippling naivete... lack[ing] objectivity and balance."<sup>28</sup> Summers, in a nationally syndicated column, strongly criticized Krepinevich's book as "revisionist," wondering if military strategy had been turned back into the hands of "academic gurus." Consider the dilemma posed to future Army leaders forced to choose an either/or proposition on something as complex as the lessons of military strategy.

#### CONCLUSION AND TRANSITION

This chapter has introduced the thesis by stating the background from which the research question emerged, and what additional questions need to be addressed as the thesis and research progresses. A general impression has been provided on the nature of the task at hand and how this work will attempt to contribute to the field of study. Key definitions have been provided. What the thesis will not do has also been explained.

I will now pass to the "Review of the Literature" chapter which will sketch the evolution of scholarship on the legacy of Vietnam from the conclusion of the war to the present.

## CHAPTER 1

### ENDNOTES

1 The Pentagon Briefing referred to occurred on Wednesday, 20 December 1989 at 0745 AM EDT when Secretary of Defense Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin L. Powell, briefed the Pentagon Press pool on Operation "Just Cause." The Presidential news conference was held on Thursday, 21 December 1989 during the afternoon. Both news conferences were carried by CNN and other major networks.

2 For example, on the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour during 20-21 December 1989, such invited guests as Edward Luttwak and General (Retired) Edward C. "Shy" Meyer were asked about how long U.S. troops were to remain in Panama. On Ted Koppel's Nightline program of 21 December 1989, Admiral (Retired) William Crowe, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and newly installed Panamanian President Guerillmo Endara were asked by Ted Koppel how long U.S. troops would be needed in Panama City.

3 During the course of the Ted Koppel Nightline interview of 21 December 1989, mentioned in the previous endnote, with Panamanian President Endara, the newly installed leader of Panama publically stated that he had asked President Bush to have U.S. troops out of Panama within a month. This request was somewhat remarkable given the fact that at the time of the televised interview Panama City was as yet unsecure, looting was rampant, and the Panamanian Defense Forces had not yet been completely broken. No indigenous Panamanian constabulary existed to maintain order and Manuel Noriega was still at large.

4 David Fromkin and James Chace, "The Lessons of Vietnam?," Foreign Affairs 63 (Spring 1985): 745.

5 Bernard Weintraub, "2-Month U.S. Stay on Grenada Seen: Congressman Says Force May Be Needed 'Into Next Year'," New York Times, 6 November 1983, sec. 1, p. 1.

6 Richard Halloran, "General Hopes Grenada G.I.s Will Be Out By Thanksgiving," New York Times, 7 November 1983, sec. 1, p. A16.

General John W. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had appeared on NBC's Meet The Press on the day prior to this being reported by the New York Times. He was asked by reporters on Meet The Press about the length of time U.S. troops would be in Grenada. These same types of questions were again asked six years later during the Panama invasion.

7 Stephen B. Young, "Salvador Parallels Vietnam. This Time Let's Win," New York Times, 22 May 1983, sec. 4, p. 21.

8 Young, "Salvador Parallels Vietnam. This Time, Let's Win," 21.

9 Ronald Steele, "Salvador Isn't Vietnam. Illusions Roll On," New York Times, 22 May 1983, sec. 4, p. 21.

10 Steel, "Salvador Isn't Vietnam. Illusions Roll On," 21.

11 Steel, "Salvador Isn't Vietnam. Illusions Roll On," 21.

12 Steel, "Salvador Isn't Vietnam. Illusions Roll On," 21.

13 Bruce Palmer, Jr., The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam, (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 44-46.

14 Russell F. Weigley, "Reflections on "Lessons" From Vietnam," in Vietnam as History: Ten Years After the Paris Peace Accords, ed. Peter Braestrup, (Washington, DC: University Press, 1984), 115.

15 Harry G. Summers, Jr., "The Academic Gurus of Guerrilla War Are Gaining Ground Again," Kansas City Times 15 June 1989, p. 22.

16 Stanley Karnow, Vietnam: A History (New York: Viking, 1983), 17.

17 Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 266.

18 Ernest R. May, "Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy (New York: Oxford, 1973), 190.

19 Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., The Army and Vietnam (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1986); Mark Clodfelter, The Limits of Airpower (New York: Free Press, 1989); David Howell Petraeus, "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam: A Study of Military Influence and the Use of Force in the Post-Vietnam Era" (Ph.D. diss., Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, 1987).

20 David Howell Petraeus, "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam: A Study of Military Influence and the Use of Force in the Post-Vietnam Era" (1987), i.

Ted Koppel, on the ABC Nightline program of 21 December 1989 alluded to this theme regarding the hesitency of the U.S. military to become involved when asking Admiral (retired) William Crowe about what the U.S. military was to do in Panama.

21 Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy: A Critical Assessment of the Vietnam War (Carlisle: US Army War College, 1982), 57.

22 James Thompson, quoted in No More Vietnams? The War and the Future of American Foreign Policy, ed. Richard N. Pfeffer (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 258.

23 Ernest R. May, "Lessons" Of The Past; Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, Thinking In Time (New York: The Free Press, 1986).

24 Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 1 Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms; U.S. Department of the Army and U.S. Department of the Air Force, Field Manual (FM) 100-20/Air Force Manual (AFM) 2-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, Approved Final Draft (Washington, DC: GPO, 1989).

25 Phillip B. Davidson, Vietnam at War (London, Sidgewick & Jackson, 1988), 796-7.

26 Douglas Pike, Viet Cong: The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (Cambridge: MIT, 1966), 34.

27 Douglas Pike, Viet Cong, 36.

28 Bruce Palmer, Jr., review of The Army and Vietnam by Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., in Parameters: Journal of the U.S. Army War College 16 (Autumn 1986): 84.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter summarizes and briefly evaluates the existing scholarship and research relating to the "lessons" of Vietnam. This chapter will identify the schools of thought and their principal proponents which have offered strategic assessments. They will serve as a backdrop against which I will attempt to construct the Army's "conventional wisdom" on Vietnam's strategic legacy. This will be of importance to the generation of officers without Vietnam experience. As already mentioned, the post-Vietnam Army will deal with Vietnam's legacy. It will be asked to make recommendations on matters of national strategy. Later, post-Vietnam generation officers will become senior Army policy makers. They will increasingly rely on the "intellectual capital" they have developed on the Vietnam War. This intellectual capital will guide them to critically assess whatever "lesson" that is being offered for adoption.

For purposes of organization, this chapter will start with a general overview of the existing scholarship relating to Vietnam. I will organize this chapter along chronological lines, starting with the Vietnam "lessons" literature which began to appear in 1975 to present. Choosing 1975 as a starting date does not mean that nothing had been written before that time. David Halberstam published his Pulitzer Prize winning book, The Best and The Brightest, in 1969. Also, Frances FitzGerald's Bancroft Prize winning book, Fire in the Lake appeared in 1972. Prominent periodicals like Foreign Affairs and The New Republic carried on the Vietnam War debate well before the war ended. I have arbitrarily chosen 1975 as a starting point since Saigon fell in that year. Also, U.S. ground forces had been gone from Vietnam for two years. The furor over the Watergate scandal had subsided. With the fall of Saigon, the "postwar debate" began in earnest. Postwar revisionists competed for how the history books would be written. However, seizing the historical high ground has been, and continues to be, elusive.

The "lessons" literature touched upon in this chapter, of necessity, will be chosen on a selective, though hopefully representative, basis. The postwar debate has been prolific. I will attempt to draw broad lines which categorize the "lessons" literature rather than review each



and every work. To do otherwise, goes clearly beyond the resources of this study. Furthermore, such an attempt only loses the reader in a mass of detail which detracts from my fundamental aim--to identify the Army's "conventional wisdom."

#### OVERVIEW

Regardless of one's attitude toward the wisdom or folly of our Vietnam policy over the years, it should not be difficult to agree that it is a historical episode worthy of careful study and review.... But such a study will not be easy to carry out. For maximum value it should include as participants the principal decision makers responsible for Vietnam policy....

Maxwell Taylor  
Swords and Plowshares, 1972

Maxwell Taylor passed away in April 1987. His wish for a careful study and review of our "wisdom or folly" was fulfilled in part well before his death. To use the adjective "voluminous" to describe the spilling of ink over Vietnam post-mortems represents a gross understatement. Vietnam has been the subject of at least 1,200 books, thousands of newspaper and magazine articles, and scores of motion pictures and television documentaries.<sup>1</sup>

However, Maxwell Taylor did not realize his wish concerning participation in the study by the principal decision makers. Although several Vietnam symposia or

seminar-like gatherings have taken place, a full and continued participation by the "principal decision makers" has been conspicuously absent from the postwar debate.<sup>2</sup> For example, Lyndon Johnson died in 1973 and Robert McNamara has observed a self-imposed silence on the Vietnam War.<sup>3</sup> Former policy makers have opted to pen their own versions of the study Taylor called for by writing from retirement.

This observation indicts former policy makers. Maxwell Taylor foresaw the reticence on the part of former policy makers well in advance. His words, that subsequently followed his epigram presented above, recognized this possibility. Taylor conceded that "[such] a participation may be difficult to obtain, particularly since the admission that a lesson exists is often tantamount to an admission of erroneous judgment."<sup>4</sup> The following brief summary of former policy makers' views on Vietnam illustrates Maxwell Taylor's prescience on this very point.

#### **LESSONS ON "ENDS" FROM FORMER POLICY MAKERS**

Various Vietnam-era policy makers have voiced their strategic assessments. Alexander Haig says that the U.S. misunderstood the nature of the enemy, arguing that our primary adversary was Moscow. Had we gone to Moscow, and demanded an end to the aggression, there would have been no war.<sup>5</sup> This argument fails to recognize how President Lyndon

Johnson successfully twisted Mr. Kosygin's arm in 1965 to have Ho Chi Minh explore compromises to end the war.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the North Vietnamese did not follow Moscow's suggestion. This nullifies Haig's "go to the source" logic. Even if Haig's analysis could be construed to mean that Vietnam was a total satellite of Moscow, perhaps [Vietnam] was not the right place to fight the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

Let's transfer Haig's argument out of the policy domain down to the strategic-military level. Let's further exclude his fixation with Moscow. Having done this, the assertion about mistaking our "true" enemy has found merit by other authors. Harry Summers, author of On Strategy, argues that our true enemy was the North Vietnamese regular forces, not the Viet Cong.<sup>8</sup> But, even this argument for U.S. military-strategic failure doesn't embrace the very plausible possibility that North Vietnam had a "synthesis" of forces strategy. North Vietnam could have employed regular forces, in combination with local and guerilla forces, fielding a "triad" of North Vietnamese military power. This force strategy could flexibly shift at will against the Army of Vietnam (ARVN) and U.S. forces.<sup>9</sup>

Richard Nixon has treated his readers to a novel idea. "When we signed the Paris Peace agreements in 1973, we had won the war.... Defeat came only when the Congress refused to provide military aid to Saigon."<sup>10</sup> George W.

Ball, the former Undersecretary of State for Kennedy and Johnson, replied with a vengeance in a 1985 New York Times editorial. This editorial appeared at the same time Nixon had published this startling assertion in his book No More Vietnams. Ball, noting that the Johnson Administration had concluded the Vietnam War to be unwinnable, took Nixon to task over the idea of "winning."<sup>11</sup> Ball singled out Nixon's belated offer to withdraw troops unilaterally after he had already announced a phased troop withdrawal. He contended that this produced a North Vietnamese victory well before Congress allegedly stabbed the Nixon Administration and South Vietnam in the back.<sup>12</sup>

Nixon's claim to a 1973 victory can certainly be viewed as self-serving. Later, in his book, No More Vietnams, he claimed Watergate and continuing Vietnam War opposition crippled the executive from dealing with mounting North Vietnamese aggression.<sup>13</sup> Like Summers, Nixon concluded that "we failed to understand that the war was an invasion from North Vietnam, not an insurgency in South Vietnam."<sup>14</sup> Nixon concluded that we failed to tailor our military tactics to the political circumstances of the war. He also cited our failure to understand our enemy and what it would take to defeat him.<sup>15</sup> Nixon excoriated Kennedy for allowing the armed forces to fight the war their way, rather

than developing the new skills to defeat the unique type of enemy they faced.

Nixon also condemned Kennedy and his advisors for failure to understand the vitally important distinction between revolutionary war and guerrilla warfare as a military operation. Nixon differentiated guerrilla war from revolutionary war, the latter being a "political operation."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, like Summers, Nixon has started out by defining Vietnam as a conventional war. But, unlike Summers, Nixon had a more sophisticated view of how revolutionary war employs guerrilla war as one of its many instrumentalities. However, Nixon, in the end, came close to Summers' position when he decides that, "In North Vietnam, we kept our military pressure sharply limited and increased it only in gradual increments in hopes of inducing North Vietnam to seek a negotiated peace. We should have known that we could never coax Ho Chi Minh into abandoning a war he had chosen to start. We should have forced him to abandon it [*italics in original*]."<sup>17</sup>

In other words, Richard Nixon tells us that conventional military force was inappropriate for the South's insurgency. It would have proved effective against the North's more conventional military means. However, Nixon's idea to force Ho Chi Minh to abandon the struggle, after having just excoriated the Kennedy Administration for

failing to understand the nature of the enemy, appears somewhat self-contradictory.

George Ball, who took Richard Nixon to task as noted above, testified before the April 1985 House Committee on Foreign Affairs Hearing on The Lessons of Vietnam. Ball's overall conclusions reflected a sense of fate in America's involvement in Indochina. Ball found that Vietnam was a natural consequence of "our exuberant sense of mission and power in the early 1960s."<sup>18</sup> Ball characterized the predominant feeling as an overconfidence bordering on omnipotence. Ball surmised that this led the U.S. to believe that it could, with a limited commitment of resources, enable South Vietnam to stop the Viet Cong and forestall Hanoi's threatened intervention.<sup>19</sup>

This 1960's American hubris aside, Ball concluded we should never commit American power to a limited war without carefully defining the conditions that must be met by the government we are assisting. Ball distinguished himself from Kissinger in this respect. In 1985, Kissinger had urged that once America commits itself to military action, no alternative exists to achieving stated objectives.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, Ball concluded that the overall U.S. preoccupation with "honor" or "prestige" blinded it from the international spectacle of a powerful nation unsuccessfully floundering and needlessly prolonging a war. The bombing and napalming

of a defenseless people, who refused to submit to such brutalization, proved infinitely more damaging to U.S. interests.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., who served as Special Assistant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson from 1961 to 1964, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in May 1972. His testimony addressed a special session which sought to discern the causes, origins, and lessons of the Vietnam War. To Senator Fullbright's question, "What are the lessons of Vietnam?," Schlesinger replied: (1) That everything in the world is not of equal importance to the U.S.; (2) That the U.S. cannot be the permanent guarantor of stability in a turbulent and changing world; (3) That the U.S. cannot do everything in the world and certainly that white men cannot determine the destiny of countries in the Third World; (4) That all problems in the world are not military problems and military force is not the most effective means of national power; (5) That if the United States does decide to fight, it must maintain a rational proportion between our means and our ends; and finally, (6) That foreign policy is not the private property of the executive branch of the government.<sup>21</sup>

Schlesinger inserts a November 1961 statement by John Kennedy as evidence to support his position. Although Schlesinger calls attention to the more restrained tone of

Kennedy's words, one cannot fail to contrast it with the more grandiloquent rhetoric of the inaugural address. Schlesinger's choice to characterize Kennedy's "true views" was:

We must face the fact that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient--that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity--and that, therefore, there cannot be an American solution to every world problem.<sup>22</sup>

Robert S. McNamara has observed a self-imposed silence about Vietnam. What little is known about his strategic assessment derives from his testimony at William Westmoreland's libel suit against CBS in 1984. It took a lawsuit to get McNamara to talk, but even then he qualified his remarks by saying: "My memory is imperfect [and] I do not believe a participant should be the judge of his own actions.... That is why I haven't talked [about Vietnam] for 20 years."<sup>23</sup> Even the deposition left by the Westmoreland libel suit will not illuminate the former Secretary of Defense's views on American objectives in Vietnam. His testimony largely focuses on CBS's claim that Westmoreland fabricated or provided misleading figures on enemy strength during 1967.

Even the more focused commentaries provided by Ball and Schlesinger still fail to provide any sense that the architects of American policy have achieved a postwar



consensus. Some policy makers' views remain patently self-serving. Therefore, postwar assessments do suffer from the perception that "lessons" equate to "admissions of error."

The Weinberger Doctrine represents one version of the lessons of the Vietnam War. It offers the policy maker a prescriptive guide to the use of military force.<sup>24</sup>

Weinberger's six tests template future, fluid, and complex politico-military situations so as to conform with previously "ratified" lessons. From the preceding brief discussion, what those "lessons" are remains very much open to question. Even if these "lessons" achieved some degree of consensus, they may bear no relation or approximation to the current circumstances at hand. Therefore, prescriptive "tests" tend to militate against the crisis being judged in its own context and on its own terms. Much argument can be made for the case that by trying to fit Vietnam into the Berlin, Korean, World War II, or Munich templates U.S. policy makers grossly distorted reality both at the policy and military strategy levels.<sup>25</sup>

Former architects of Vietnam policy have left the Army strategist with a host of conflicting policy "lessons." He must struggle with this reality when looking at the "means" selected during Vietnam. This phenomenon is significant. In order to grasp at deriving appropriate military-strategic lessons, strategists must have some idea of how

they relate back to the policy goals or objectives, which military strategy ultimately serves.

Perhaps the best source which details the "mixed bag" nature of national policy lessons is David Fromkin's and James Chace's Spring 1985 article in Foreign Affairs entitled "The Lessons of Vietnam?." Fromkin and Chace present the "lessons" taken by key national policy makers, congressmen, senators, and nationally recognized writers.

For example, the authors quote Representative Gene Snyder (D-Kentucky) who believes that the President should be strictly limited in his power to intervene.<sup>26</sup> The article cites William Westmoreland as having concluded that the U.S. encouragement and participation in the Diem coup Americanized the war. According to Westmoreland, it caused the Saigon government to lose its legitimacy, indigenous roots, and domestic appeal.<sup>27</sup> Richard Nixon and former United Nations (UN) Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick took direct aim at the Congress. They found that the most generous "excuse" for our failure in Vietnam was that we didn't know (the "we" here is the Congress) what would happen after aid was cut. Both Nixon and Kirkpatrick answer this "lack of knowledge" with their own sharp rejoinder, "now we know."<sup>28</sup>

The "principal decision makers'" choice to author their own interpretations on the legacy of Vietnam may have more to do with the American system of government than with

fear of admissions to bad judgment. A system which turns its policy makers out on the street at least every four or eight years guarantees an inherent lack of consistency. Whatever the cause, be it death, self-imposed silence, or fear of being forced to admit to bad judgment, the policy community offers little. Something far short of the coherent study suggested by Taylor remains for posterity.

The preceding section has briefly reviewed the scant "lessons" on objectives offered by former policy makers. We will now turn to examine how the postwar debate has critiqued the success of the various means employed in Vietnam.

#### **LESSONS AND THE CHANGING TIDES OF TIME 1975-1990**

##### **Low Tide 1975**

George C. Herring, in his book The United States and Vietnam: America's Longest War: 1950-1975, writes that the nation experienced a self-conscious, collective amnesia beginning in 1975. He supports his point by citing that Vietnam was hardly mentioned in the 1976 Presidential campaign.<sup>29</sup> Despite Herring's general conclusion, some writings appearing as early as 1975 had concluded Vietnam was a tragic episode in American history. Authors began to characterize Vietnam as a gigantic mistake and unwarranted

gamble to redeem a corrupt South Vietnam regime.<sup>30</sup> The titles of essays in a special 1975 issue of the New Republic reflected the national mood.<sup>31</sup>

For example, the lead editorial was entitled "On the Disaster," followed by essays with such titles as "Our SOBs.... The End is the Beginning.... Grand Illusion.... Pushing Sand.... The Secret War.... Myths and Interests.... Hubris: National and Personal.... The Elite Protects Itself.... Lies and Whispers."<sup>32</sup>

This initial burst of self-flagellation stemmed directly from the divisive passions stirred up during the war. It grew from fashionable criticisms offered before 1975 by writers like David Halberstam and Frances FitzGerald. Halberstam's The Best and The Brightest, a war time best seller and pop-history, traced America's descent into the Vietnam "quagmire" due to the cold-war mentality adopted by a succession of Presidents with overachieving personalities.<sup>33</sup> These Presidents surrounded themselves with a coterie of intellectually gifted and tested advisors. These assistants fed their chief executive's appetite for power and achievement. Writing shortly after Halberstam, Maxwell Taylor's opinion of Halberstam's work was "this lad must have villains."<sup>34</sup>

FitzGerald's Fire in the Lake, attributed American failure to cultural shortsightedness.<sup>35</sup> In her closing

passage, Miss FitzGerald proclaims in nothing less than a lyrical style that:

Pressure is building towards one of those sudden historical shifts when 'individualism' and its attendant corruptions gives way to the revolutionary community. When this shift takes place... it will simply mean that the moment has arrived for the narrow flame of revolution to cleanse the lake of Vietnamese society from the corruption and disorder of the American War.<sup>36</sup>

At the time of Fire in the Lake's publication, a scholarly review had pointed out that the author did not know the Vietnamese language. It also characterized the book's depiction of the Vietnamese national character as "little short of disastrous."<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the book's wide audience and professional acclaim contributed to the initial self-image America had adopted for itself in Vietnam.

This image depicted a fated U.S. effort doomed to failure when it chose to swim against the historical current lyrically sketched in the closing passage of FitzGerald's book. American individualism and its attendant corruptions could not withstand the historical forces arrayed against it in the form of Vietnamese communism.

In his biography on his father, General Maxwell Taylor, John M. Taylor muses in a footnote about Halberstam's work. He says, "It is a sobering thought that this form of journalism not only enriches the author but can

gain him a Pulitzer Prize."<sup>38</sup> Taylor's remark appears to be equally applicable to FitzGerald's work.

#### The First "Revisionists": Enter Some Balanced Scholarship

Between the third and seventh anniversaries of the fall of Saigon more serious and balanced scholarship began to appear on the Vietnam War. Some of this literature questioned the initial outpouring of guilt, shame, and condemnation of American hubris. Perhaps the most balanced view of the Vietnam War which first appeared was George C. Herring's America's Longest War: The United States in Vietnam 1950-1975. Herring drew extensively on the Pentagon Papers and the then recently declassified material in the presidential libraries.

Herring saw the American objectives in Vietnam as hostages to the containment policy. Successive American administrations adopted containment without serious question or review. Herring cited the recurring failure to re-examine the validity of the underlying assumption that denying South Vietnam to communism served U.S. national interests.

Herring's ultimate conclusion about American "ends" related to the continued viability of the containment policy. His bottom line stated "Vietnam made clear the inherent unworkability of a policy of global containment."<sup>39</sup>

Leslie H. Gelb's and Richard K. Betts' The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked along with Larry Berman's, Planning A Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam put forward a common thesis.<sup>40</sup> Gelb and Betts take issue with Halberstam's idea that the United States stumbled into the Vietnam "quagmire" due to hubris and miscalculation. Rather, they assert that the national security apparatus functioned well. It provided successive Presidents with the necessary facts and detailed options on which each administration acted.

They portrayed Presidents Truman through Nixon wedged in by two equally unattractive policy alternatives. On the one hand, American presidents were afraid of losing Vietnam to the communists. In contra-position to this, the military advisors to these presidents recommended options (read "means") which could lead to war with China. These recommendations would cause any American president so dearly politically that they would fail to gain domestic support at election time. Consequently, five successive administrations fashioned their own middle course "compromises." They consistently did the minimally essential to deny South Vietnam to communism.

This very same "middle course dilemma" thesis characterized Larry Berman's work, Planning a Tragedy.<sup>41</sup> Focusing on the critical times in 1965 when the Johnson

Administration pondered the initial commitment of U.S. ground forces, Berman found the same tug of war between domestic and foreign policy objectives. The Johnson Administration understood that the Vietnamese communists were close to victory in 1965. However, President Johnson felt strongly that he could not withstand a political challenge from the conservatives if he had "lost Vietnam." As young Congressmen, Lyndon Johnson and Dean Rusk had witnessed the Democratic party's loss in the 1952 Presidential campaign. The Republican party had successfully pilloried the Democrats for the "loss of China."

At the same time, President Johnson realized that if he followed the Pentagon's recommendations to mobilize the reserves, congressional support would erode to the point where it threatened the survival of his Great Society Program. George Herring captured the essence of President Johnson's sentiments when he quoted the President as saying that a congressional debate on "that bitch of a war" would destroy "the woman I really loved--the Great Society."<sup>42</sup> Simultaneously, both Medicare and Civil Rights legislation were about to exit congressional committees. Berman hazards the conclusion that Johnson had neither a plan for winning the war or getting out. Hence the middle-course "gradualist" approach which characterized U.S. policy in Vietnam. Given the nature of the U.S. political system,



where domestic and foreign policies are inextricably linked, this phenomenon will continue. It will plague future U.S. national leaders and the military professionals who support their policies.

The "Means" Debate Begins: The Conventional Military Argument "We Could Have Won If Our Hands Weren't Tied."

As early as 1976, the post-war debate began to take issue with the "means" variable in the strategic equation. Arguments appeared stressing that the war had been lost due to a mistaken, inept, or hamstrung employment of the appropriate military tools. William C. Westmoreland's A Soldier Reports (1976) cited the flawed policy of "graduated response." Westmoreland argued that had the United States employed its military "means" quickly and decisively, the war would have been won without provoking a domestic backlash.<sup>43</sup>

Dave Richard Palmer's Summons of the Trumpet (1978) and U.S. Grant Sharp's Strategy for Defeat (1978) shared Westmoreland's central thesis. As George Herring noted, these military officers' commentaries on the war are almost exclusively military.<sup>44</sup> The common thread running through their writings pinpointed the use, or misuse of military means to achieve policy ends in South Vietnam. These

authors did not address such problems as pacification or the political situation in South Vietnam.<sup>45</sup>

While Sharp aimed his writings at the restrictions placed on U.S. bombing, Palmer wrote that the strategy of attrition was proof positive of an absence of strategy. However, he found that Potomac policy makers bore culpability for leaving the military with no logical alternatives. Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger placed himself squarely in this school of thought when he wrote that "rather than simply counter your opponent's power; it is necessary to go for the heart of the opponent's power; destroy his military forces rather than simply being involved endlessly in military operations."<sup>46</sup>

This is an admittedly short and general summation of a sample of the former military policy makers' views on the lessons relating to "means." More will be covered later in this chapter and in Chapter Three as we see the Vietnam "lessons" literature develop over time and within the Army.

#### The Counter-Revisionists--The Counterinsurgency "Hearts and Minds" Argument

Countering the conventional military school, another group began to articulate a challenge to the idea that military conventional force would have succeeded. These authors, like the conventional school before them, accepted

the importance of U.S. policy ends in Vietnam. They operated from the same premise in assuming that the war could have been won.

The counterinsurgency school charged the military leaders who were "in charge" with selecting inappropriate "means" which invited strategic failure. Their common theme indicted American military leaders for fighting a conventional war in a revolutionary war environment.

Like the initial deluge of self-criticism literature which appeared in 1975, the counterinsurgency school traced its roots back to both during the war and before the war. Sir Robert Thompson, John Vann, Robert Komer, Edward Lansdale, Henry Cabot Lodge, and journalist David Halberstam had individually criticized American strategy.<sup>47</sup> Before the war, the successes in the Philippines against the Huk rebellion and the British experience in Malaya were the models from which the counterinsurgency school drew its ideas and experience. The counterinsurgency approach touched upon both the "ends" and "means" in the strategic question. Unlike the conventional school, the counterinsurgency school oriented on the allegiance and continued support of the people. This was the objective to be gained, not the outright defeat of the enemy forces. In so doing, their argument continued, military goals must be subordinated to the political.<sup>48</sup>

This approach, popularly called "winning their hearts and minds," employed such "means" as land reform, rural development, or anti-corruption campaigns.<sup>49</sup> It is also known by the approaches taken in the strategic hamlet and CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary (Rural) Development) programs. Counterinsurgency proponents advanced the view that policy makers were never confronted with a clear cut delineation of options between policy goals and means. This delineation would have focused on the differences between the conventional school's "no holds barred" argument and the counterinsurgency school's program.<sup>50</sup> The counterinsurgency advocates also pointed to the fact that their particular version of "means" were never adequately resourced to allow for success. The pre-occupation or focus on the conventional, big-unit war gets blamed for this.<sup>51</sup>

The most important work in this school of thought, Guenter Lewy's America in Vietnam, appeared in 1978. Lewy argued that instead of Westmoreland's attrition strategy, a population security strategy more properly fitted the operative realities in South Vietnam.<sup>52</sup> Lewy flatly stated that U.S. strategy should have been based on established principles of counterinsurgency warfare. He cited the Army's Special Forces Civic Action program as a more appropriate "means."<sup>53</sup> In the same vein, Sir Robert

Thompson, with experience from the defeat of the communist insurgents in Malaya, judged American military leadership defective. He asserted that the U.S. military failed to adopt the correct strategy because of American failure to perceive the true nature of the war.<sup>54</sup>

#### Beyond American Ends and Means--The "No-Win" School

While these schools competed for the mantle of enduring Vietnam "lessons," a third point of view appeared during the late 1970s. This school of thought cuts the legs out from under the more traditional arguments already advanced. It decided that Vietnam's problems were so intractable that, they a priori invalidated any strategy offered that attempted to resolve them. Robert E. Osgood's Limited War Revisited (1979) rejected the conventional school's argument for massive application of military power as well as the counterinsurgency school's call for a more appropriately constructed ends and means to produce victory.<sup>55</sup>

Rather, Osgood pointed out that Vietnam's salvation was beyond U.S. capabilities from the beginning. Like present day Lebanon, Osgood's thesis described South Vietnam as an entity that did not qualify in meeting the traditional definition of a nation state. Osgood called Vietnam "a fractured society with no experience in self-government..."

governed by urban elites... dependent on an incompetent civil service and an untrustworthy Army."<sup>56</sup> Arrayed against it, South Vietnam found itself in a struggle with a fanatical enemy organized to complete a decade of revolutionary warfare. Osgood found the "lessons" to be derived from Vietnam too qualified to be of any practical utility. He concluded by saying that "at best these lessons are antidotes... to the grand simplifications and ingenious strategems of the Kennedy era."<sup>57</sup>

This "no-win" viewpoint, reinforced by a "no lessons" conclusion, arrived at the proposition that the strategic formulation of ends and means winds up in an internal contradiction. The "ends," a free, non-communist South Vietnam, could be attained, if at all, by employing "means" on a scale so politically or morally abhorrent to eventually destroy the ends they set out to achieve. To have relentlessly bombed North Vietnam or occupied it may have been well beyond the bounds of political possibilities for the United States at any time during the war. Alternatively, a counterinsurgency effort, protracted in time and casualties, would have violated George Marshall's famous saying that democracies can't fight a Seven Years' War.<sup>58</sup>

Osgood's arguments have an intellectual heritage which predates American intervention in South Vietnam. Hans

J. Morgenthau had prophesied as early as 1962 that American intervention into Vietnam should be avoided. He had decided the chances of success slim, and the consequences of failure too great.<sup>59</sup> Morgenthau concluded that "the inappropriate and unfavorable situation in South Vietnam would drag the U.S. into an interminable war which we would be unable to win in any case."<sup>60</sup>

Not only did Morgenthau pre-date the postwar "no-win" school, but also George Ball, Undersecretary of State to John Kennedy, believed that America's reach had exceeded her grasp. Ball concluded that the simple factors of race and nationalism proved decisive in Vietnam.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, Ball is convinced that the United States could not have constructively influenced the development of political stability in Vietnam.<sup>62</sup> As to the efficacy of military force, Ball wrote as early as 1965 that "no one has demonstrated that a white ground force of whatever size can win a guerrilla war--which at the same time is a civil war between Asians--in jungle terrain in the midst of a population that refuses cooperation to the white forces [and the South Vietnamese]."<sup>63</sup>

### The Conservative Revisionists--The 1980s Begin

At the turn of the decade a "conservative revisionist" school of thought began to emerge. The chief proponents of this school of thought were Norman Podhoretz and his two books, The Present Danger (1980), and Why Were We in Vietnam? (1982).<sup>64</sup> Also, Robert W. Tucker's The Purposes of American Power (1981) belongs to this school of thought.<sup>65</sup>

Norman Podhoretz had served in the role of the dean of neoconservative foreign policy intellectuals who had surfaced with the beginning of the Reagan foreign policy. As a former critic of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, he nevertheless had a purpose for writing. He wanted to lay to rest the "lie" that the Vietnam War was evidence of the gross amorality of U.S. foreign policy. As the reader will recall, the titles to New Republic articles published five years before Podhoretz and Frances FitzGerald's Fire in the Lake suggested U.S. amorality and corruption of purpose. In May 1977, President Jimmy Carter had spoken of "the intellectual and moral poverty" of the U.S. policies that took America into the war.<sup>66</sup>

This self-administered moral condemnation led Podhoretz to the conclusion that the millions of Americans growing up to maturity during the Vietnam War had been ingrained with hostility towards their own country and had



concurrently engendered an unwillingness to defend it in the future.<sup>67</sup> Podhoretz set about to counteract this "danger" by bashing some popular myths on Vietnam.

Podhoretz argued that a succession of U.S. presidents pursued the U.S. containment policy **on the cheap**.<sup>68</sup> President Kennedy intervened in Vietnam **on the military cheap**.<sup>69</sup> The piecemeal, incremental and yet minimum essential military aid and advisors were consciously decided upon to avoid the domestic political costs associated with a U.S. ground force commitment. President Lyndon Johnson implemented his version of the containment policy in Vietnam **on the political cheap**, refusing to build political support within the United States and at times concealed the true purposes for sending U.S. military forces to South Vietnam.<sup>70</sup> Finally, Richard Nixon attempted to extricate the U.S. from Vietnam **on the strategic cheap** by focusing on how to get out of Vietnam at the expense of explaining why the U.S. was there to begin with.<sup>71</sup>

Like the "No-Win" school before him, Podhoretz, upon much reflection, sided with Morgenthau. Podhoretz found American interests in Southeast Asia insufficient to have justified the risk.<sup>72</sup> However, Podhoretz parted company with the 'No-Win' school. He unequivocally asserted that the U.S. went into Vietnam for the sake of an ideal.<sup>73</sup> Podhoretz's essential point was that the U.S. was morally

right to go in, although it was done in a muddled, clumsy, and ineffective manner.

Robert W. Tucker's, The Purposes of American Power took issue with Podhoretz and Morgenthau's conclusion that Vietnam taught us that U.S. national treasure should only be expended when American interests are truly important or vital. Tucker pointed to an *ex post facto* analysis which attempted to apply a calculus that was totally alien to the policy which fathered U.S. intervention in Indochina.<sup>74</sup> Attempting to manufacture an after-the-fact selective or moderate form of containment transformed the 1950s version of global containment (e.g. NSC-68) into something it was not. Given the "temper of the times" Vietnam could not be seen in terms of its intrinsic significance. Instead, Vietnam was seen in relation to greater, global interests that were presumably at stake in the war.<sup>75</sup>

The "conservative revisionist" school of thought distinguishes itself from the conventional military school and counterinsurgency school in several ways. First, the conservative revisionists exclusively focus on the "ends" in the strategic equation. The conventional military and the counterinsurgent schools focused heavily on the "means." Second, the conservative revisionists are reacting to the scholarship that attacked the morality or the feasibility of American policy ends in Vietnam. The conventional and

counterinsurgent schools of thought did not question the appropriateness nor the attainability of American policy objectives in Vietnam. Third, the conservative revisionists reacted to what they perceived as distressing manifestations of the decline of American power and American will. 1980 marks the last year of the Carter presidency. The American embassy in Tehran had been seized and a year of American impotence had been displayed for the world to see. Finally, the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan.

The Army's Own Formal Inquest on "Lessons" The BDM Study--  
1979

Mindful of a previous neglect to study the Philippine Insurrection earlier in the century, the Army War College undertook a thorough analytical review of Vietnam strategy.<sup>76</sup> After becoming the U.S. Army War College Commandant in 1974, General DeWitt Smith initiated what came to be called the "Vietnam Lessons Learned Study."<sup>77</sup> When it became apparent that the study could easily overwhelm both the resources of the War College's Strategic Studies Institute and the War College itself, a commercial contractor was selected to perform the study under the control of a team of Strategic Studies Institute officers.<sup>78</sup> The study was finally published in 1979 and consisted of eight volumes and an omnibus executive summary. The single

comprehensive public volume envisioned by General DeWitt Smith had not resulted.<sup>79</sup> The study became known as the "BDM Study" after the corporation contracted to complete it. The study principally criticized "The American Way of War," a label borrowed from Professor Russell F. Weigley.<sup>80</sup> In an even-handed way, the study did not attempt to fix the cardinal blame for the American failure in Vietnam on any single individual or institution. Finding that there was a major asymmetry between the values placed upon the respective "ends" by the contending opponents in the Vietnam War, the study's authors concluded that the political, psychological, and military initiative always resided with the North Vietnamese.<sup>81</sup> They also pointed to a fundamental mismatch between American ends and means. This was brought about by the historical isolation of the U.S. military from political matters, and contrasted to the enemy's fusion of ends and means under their struggle concept or strategy known as dau tranh, which has both military and civil components.<sup>82</sup>

The BDM Study's most striking finding took exception with the popular notion of "tactical victory-strategic defeat" as the explanation of U.S. failure in Vietnam. The study emphatically stated that the U.S. lost more battles, both large and small, in Vietnam than it admitted or possibly even comprehended at the time.<sup>83</sup> This anomaly, the

study continued, resulted from the lack of an in-depth understanding of the complex nature of the political-military conflict.

By taking issue with the definition of "battle" which Americans would tend to define in terms of unit on unit-type engagements, the BDM study argued that the term used in the people's war context, and as practiced in đau tranh, saw everyone as a "soldier," not drawing the distinction between civilians and military. Given this broadened definition of "battle," the thousands of unanswered attacks by rocket, mortar, and sappers on U.S. facilities, coupled with the thousands of booby trap induced incidents of attrition, collectively added up to one-sided victories for the U.S.'s enemy. They cumulatively contributed to frustration, war-weariness, and psychological "attrition" on the U.S. side.<sup>84</sup>

#### The "Lessons Renaissance"--Approach of the 10th Anniversary of the Fall of Saigon

As the tenth anniversary of the fall of Saigon approached, a flood of literature began to appear reflecting upon the American experience in Vietnam. In point of contrast to the initial mood of 1975, these new analyses marked a substantial turn in attitudes from the 1975 timeframe.

Gary Hess captures the shift in attitudes in an article published in an April 1986 edition of Diplomatic History.<sup>85</sup> Hess called attention to the 29 April 1985 edition of The New Republic which carried a markedly revisionist tone as compared with the 1975 edition described previously.<sup>86</sup> The two editions of the New Republic, appearing in 1975 and 1985 respectively, provide two convenient benchmarks in recording the progression of thought on Vietnam. A perusal of the suggestive nature of the magazine articles' titles tells us much about the shift in attitudes. Hess wrote:

The editors [of the New Republic] found the 'right lesson' in what they titled "The Myths of Revolution." Other essays, contributed mostly by writers little known in 1975, included a former war critic reflecting on "My Change of Heart" and a Vietnamese dissident coauthoring "Vietnam's Opposition Today." Reflecting the assessment of the military effort, the issue included "How We Lost." Finally, "Reconsideration of Fire in the Lake" criticized the romantic idealization of Vietnamese communism in Frances FitzGerald's prize winning 1972 book.<sup>87</sup>

This resurgence of interest, conservative in nature, contained a large measure of military "lessons" scholarship. For purposes of keeping this portion of the chapter on the review of literature manageable, this section will review the operative "lessons" advocated in Harry G. Summers' On Strategy (1982), Bruce Palmer's The 25-Year War (1984),

Andrew Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam (1986), Douglas Pike's PAVN (1986), and Phillip B. Davidson's Vietnam at War (1988).<sup>88</sup> This section of the chapter will also briefly point to the most recent literature which challenges the conservative views put forth by the military writers. These works, taken together, are fairly representative, but deliberately not all inclusive of the "renaissance" of interest in Vietnam beginning in 1982.

#### The Conventional Argument Revisited--1st Variation--The Military Shares More of the Blame

Since Summers' and Palmer's works are mutually reinforcing, the discussion will start with the "renaissance" in "lessons" literature by grouping their works together. On what has now become a widely held perspective on the Vietnam War, Summers and Palmer tended to come together on several common ideas: the deficiency of pre-intervention military planning and advice, the failure to issue a declaration of war, the ineffectiveness of Westmoreland's strategy of attrition, and the potential success of alternative strategies.<sup>89</sup> The popularly known thesis of "tactical victory, strategic defeat" flowed from the pens of these authors, although Summers directly employed the concept and words in his book as a subtitle to his introduction.<sup>90</sup>

## Summers--On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of The Vietnam War

Summers' thesis may be characterized as follows:

Using classical Clausewitzian theory, the U.S. conduct of the war in Vietnam may be measured against a theory of war which was a product of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century warfare.<sup>91</sup> Arguing that the Korean War and the advent of the nuclear age kept the United States from clearly recognizing the "truths" in the conduct of war as espoused by Clausewitzian theory, the U.S. embarked upon faulty strategic thinking.<sup>92</sup> From the Korean War, the U.S. drew the wrong "lesson." Operations could no longer be carried to the homeland of the enemy. The Chinese crossing of the Yalu had reinforced traditional American fears of becoming involved in a land war on the Asian continent.<sup>93</sup> From the nuclear age, the U.S. fear of nuclear destruction placed self-imposed limits on U.S. means.<sup>94</sup> In the most ringing terms, Summers described these two errors in strategic thinking as the myths of self-fulfilling prophecy (fear of Chinese intervention) and The Great Fallacy (fear of nuclear destruction).<sup>95</sup>

Summers divided his book into two sections, "The Environment" and "The Engagement." In the first section, Summers put forward several themes. First, the U.S. military failed to properly advise the U.S. civilian leadership on the true horrors of war.<sup>96</sup> Second, national



leaders should not have committed the American Army to a protracted war without arousing the passions of the American people.<sup>97</sup> This violated Clausewitz's conception of "trinity" in which the government, the people, and the Army must be kept together to bring a nation to war and sustain the national support to continue the war. Third, American political leaders decided not to mobilize the American people out of a misapprehension of drawing America into a nuclear war with communist countries.<sup>98</sup>

Part Two, "The Engagement," starts out with the controversial thesis that America mistook the true nature of the war.<sup>99</sup> Defining it as a people's war or revolutionary war instead of a conventional war represented a key strategic failure.<sup>100</sup> To support this, Summers argued that the United States misdirected its resources into fighting the Viet Cong "(strategic) distraction" in the South rather than North Vietnamese regular units in the North. Summers cites the 1975 fall of Saigon to a twenty-two division North Vietnamese conventional attack as proof positive of U.S. misjudgment. He also cites the destruction of the Viet Cong after the 1968 TET Offensive and the continuing U.S. orientation on combating guerrilla forces as further evidence of how the U.S. squandered its opportunities for victory in South Vietnam.

The influence of Summers' thinking within the military, and the Army in particular, should not be minimized. In 1982, the then Commandant of the U.S. War College, Jack N. Merritt, labeled On Strategy to be "firmly on the mark." Merritt, who later became Director of the Joint Staff, and eventually retired as a four-star general, also wrote that the War College had received "overwhelmingly favorable comments" about On Strategy which included responses from the then current Army leadership. So strong was this approval that General Edward C. Meyer, Army Chief of Staff, sent a copy to all general officers in the army.<sup>101</sup> A copy also went to the White House. Subsequently, On Strategy was adopted as a text in military educational institutions of each of the armed services.<sup>102</sup>

#### Palmer--The 25-Year War

Palmer reinforced many of Summers' arguments, but did not fully agree with Summers' classification of the Vietnam War as a conventional war. Palmer agreed that U.S. failure to obtain a declaration of war had fatally undermined the overall war prosecution effort.<sup>103</sup> Palmer's critique of the military leadership's (JCS) failure to properly advise their civilian leadership paralleled Summers'. However, Palmer's criticism centered on the Joint Chiefs of Staff's unwillingness to adequately consider the

effective employment of air power or the proper use of ground troops. Coupled with these and with all decisions leading to the U.S. commitment, Palmer indicted the JCS for not painting the "downside" so that the Secretary of Defense and the President understood the risks inherent in applying military means.<sup>104</sup>

Palmer devoted a chapter in his book to the American strategy and to "The Larger Lessons" that should be taken from the Vietnam experience. In addition, Palmer found the lack of support of U.S. European allies and the absence of an integrated U.S./South Vietnamese military combined command as badly damaging the legitimacy of the U.S. war effort.<sup>105</sup> Much like Summers' Clausewitzian analysis, Palmer used the principles of war in his concluding chapter to analyze U.S. failure.

Palmer indeed parted company with Summers over the nature of the war. Unlike Summers, he did see the revolutionary or people's war aspects to the struggle and devoted some pages to the political-military nature of the conflict. His understanding embraced the mutually reinforcing roles of main force, guerrilla, and local forces in combat against U.S. forces in South Vietnam.<sup>106</sup> Palmer, in a review of On Strategy, criticized the denigration of counterinsurgency. He went on to say that insurgencies will continue to threaten U.S. interests into the foreseeable

future.<sup>107</sup> Palmer also warned that the possibility of revolutionary war should not be taken lightly. Finally, Palmer found that Summers understated the role of the Viet Cong guerrillas given that a link existed between the more classic guerrilla forces and the regular forces.<sup>108</sup> In Palmer's judgment, this nexus proved crucial to both types of forces. Despite the decimation of the Viet Cong during the 1968 TET Offensive, the guerrillas played a useful role during the subsequent conventional phase of the war.

Although Palmer's view appeared to be a little more sophisticated in this regard, he nevertheless came very close to Summers in some respects. For instance, he concluded that a "major mistake" of the war signalled North Vietnam that the United States would not invade its territory. That gave the enemy a free ride when it understood that its national territory would be inviolate and its national survival assured.<sup>109</sup> However, this seems a bit odd since bombing did take place.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Harry Summers' and Bruce Palmer's works was their willingness to take issue with the military institution itself. Although Summers faulted the military for the systems analyst approach to strategy, he foisted a disproportionate amount of the blame on institutions other than the military. In implying that one of the strategic failures was the insufficient

application of traditional combat power against North Vietnam, he dangerously absolved the Army of the need for any further introspection for its institutional mistakes. Chaplain (COL) Cecil B. Currey excoriated Summers for precisely this self-absolution in a 1989 edition of the Military Review. Currey's article laid the failure for American efforts in Vietnam squarely at the doorstep of the Army leadership who prosecuted the war without ever understanding its political nature.<sup>110</sup>

Bruce Palmer, on the other hand, was much more critical of his own institution than Summers. For Palmer, in addition to politicians, the press, and the American people, two other key players figured in the American defeat: the Armed Forces of the United States and the enemy.<sup>111</sup> Palmer's The 25-Year War left little doubt that the large number of mistakes made by the military institution had little to do with political constraints, a critical press, or the American people.<sup>112</sup>

Before this, Dave Palmer and William Westmoreland had largely faulted the civilian leadership for what went wrong. On Strategy and The 25-Year War appeared in the early to mid-1980s and began to introspectively look at how the U.S. military went about the war. For the first time they presented some alternative strategies. Together with Westmoreland, Palmer, and the Kinnard study (to be discussed

shortly), these works give a voice to how the most recently retired generation of military officers think the United States lost the war. These works will be offered to the current and upcoming generations of military officers, exerting some degree of influence over their strategic thinking about American intervention in the years to come. Before departing to another series of postwar revisionism on the counterinsurgent school, we should briefly pass to a consideration of Brigadier General (United States Army, retired) Douglas Kinnard's The War Managers, which reappeared during this time.

#### The Military's View of U.S. Objectives

The War Managers initially appeared in 1977, but was republished in 1985.<sup>113</sup> Kinnard mailed a sixty item questionnaire covering clarity, understanding, and realism of U.S. objectives in Vietnam to general officers who had served in positions of command in Vietnam from 1965 to 1972. The questionnaire was mailed in September 1974 before the outcome of the war was settled.

Twenty-nine percent of the respondents said that the U.S. goals were rather fuzzy and needed attention as the war progressed.<sup>114</sup> Another thirty-three percent said the goals were not as clear as they could have been while twenty-nine percent rated U.S. goals as clear and understandable.<sup>115</sup>

Kinnard concluded that, "Translating the overall United States objectives into something understandable by the general officers was not successfully accomplished by the policy makers."<sup>116</sup> It should be noted that except for Generals Westmoreland, Abrams, and Johnson, these general officers in Vietnam would have received their goals from other general officers.

As far as the "means" went, these same general officers found the search and destroy concept sound when it was first implemented but not later; a surprising thirty-two percent found the concept not sound at all.<sup>117</sup> Slowness in building up the Army of Vietnam and criticism of the "kill ratio" as a measure of success cumulatively reflected the military institution's disillusionment with both ends and means.<sup>118</sup> After BG Kinnard's retirement, he wrote in the War Managers that, "We invented a form of war which only we could fight and which was irrelevant to the long term political objectives.... Our heritage to our ally was a form of warfare he could not sustain."<sup>119</sup>

#### The Counterinsurgency Argument Revisited 1st Variation--The Army is to Blame

Turning back again to the issue of means, Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., a serving officer without Vietnam combat experience, challenged Summers' and Palmer's conclusions.

Describing what he called the "Army Concept," Krepinevich considered the Army incapable of assimilating the lessons of Vietnam on the strategic, operational, and tactical planes. He found this especially so in regards to being able to fight a people's or revolutionary war under modern conditions.<sup>120</sup> Krepinevich argued that the experience of World War II locked the Army's tactics, doctrine and strategy into a predilection for big units and overwhelming firepower. These solutions may not be the most effective "means" for dealing with guerrilla war or low-intensity conflict. These conflicts, Krepinevich argued, have unique social, economic, political, and military dimensions that will not yield to straight-forward military solutions.<sup>121</sup>

Krepinevich's well-researched and documented arguments indicted both the Army leadership and the Department of Defense for employing tactics and doctrine designed to defeat the Warsaw Pact armies instead of Asian guerrillas. In a sharp difference with Summers, he forcefully asserted that the military consistently misread the nature of the war it was asked to prosecute in Southeast Asia. Instead of arriving at the conventional war conclusion, Krepinevich saw it as a revolutionary insurgent war.

Central to this thesis' investigation, Krepinevich's book focused on the mismatch between the enemy's strategy and the American strategy conceived to counter it. Instead



of attempting to counteract the guerrillas' objective of population control, U.S. military leaders approached the "battlefield" in traditional military terms.<sup>122</sup> The U.S. military targeted the guerrillas' external support. In more familiar terms, Krepinevich's version of the true "strategic distraction" was not the southern Viet Cong insurgency (Summers' position) but rather the self-defeating perception that external support (as embodied by the Ho Chi Minh Trail or Viet Cong sanctuaries) was the enemy's true center of gravity. Krepinevich insisted that the appropriate counterstrategy must force an isolation of the guerrillas from the population and not their external sources of supply or sanctuaries--a more complex and daunting political-military task to execute.

Given the strategic orientation on the population, Krepinevich went beyond mere criticism and offers a mix of alternative military strategies to support his position. Highly mobile forces conducting saturation patrolling, backed-up by larger units, themselves highly mobile, represent part of the solution. However, these forces must be simultaneously complemented by efforts to train, equip, and employ local police forces. Finally, efforts to isolate the guerrillas depend on intelligence and elimination of guerrilla cadres.

Krepinevich and Summers have criticized each other in their writings. In response to Summers' assertion that an alternative strategy of making an incursion into Laos to block North Vietnamese penetration and isolate the battlefield (the El Paso Plan disapproved by the civilian leadership--an example of Summers' thesis to carry the war to the enemy), Krepinevich writes:

... the incursion strategy appears to be a *post hoc* justification for an absence of an Army analysis on the war and its continued faith in the methods that proved successful in previous conventional wars rather than a true strategic alternative. Like the Army during the war, Summers seems intent not so much on understanding this "alien" conflict environment as on fitting it into a form that justifies the Army's preferred methods of waging war.<sup>123</sup>

Summers answered the charge in his syndicated column. Referring to Krepinevich as an "in-house academic" teaching at the U.S. Military Academy, Summers blasted Krepinevich for reaching the wrong conclusion.<sup>124</sup> In almost shrill terms, Summers cites the twenty-two division North Vietnamese cross border invasion in 1975 and slammed Krepinevich and other "academic gurus of guerrilla war" for being overly enamored of theory while "the facts be damned."<sup>125</sup>

Krepinevich's analysis drew fire from not only Summers, but also from senior Army officers who served in senior leadership positions during Vietnam and then returned home to instrumental posts in the post-Vietnam Army.

William E. DePuy (General, U.S. Army, retired), who commanded the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam and later served as Commander, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, has critiqued Krepinevich's work. He questioned Krepinevich's ideas on the employment of U.S. combat forces in counterinsurgency operations. DePuy forcefully countered, arguing that "the proper, indeed the only, role for U.S. combat forces is to isolate the insurgent battle ground from outside intervention."<sup>126</sup> Again, as with the debate over the very nature of the war (revolutionary or conventional?), a parallel dispute over the very definition of "battlefield" erupted. Without putting words in Krepinevich's book that are not already there, it should be pointed out that the 1979 BDM study took issue with the conventional definition of the battlefield, seeing it in a much broader context than mere unit to unit set-piece actions.

Not only have Summers and DePuy answered Krepinevich, but so has Bruce Palmer, Jr., a former U.S. Army Acting Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). Palmer aired the strongest objections. After giving Krepinevich credit on several points, Palmer chided him for failing to reflect the overall basic realities in Vietnam: Vietnam could not survive without continuing U.S. support so long as Hanoi retained the strategic initiative.<sup>127</sup> Palmer characterized

Krepinevich's book as "suffused... with a crippling naivete and lack of historical breath." Palmer reacted strongly to Krepinevich's "pinning the blame... squarely on the U.S. Army."<sup>128</sup> Palmer concluded his critique by objecting to the proposition that all the U.S. national inadequacies in Vietnam can be laid at the U.S. Army's doorstep.

An interesting aspect of the reaction to the Krepinevich thesis is that the issues are being fought out between the generation of officers without Vietnam experience, and those senior officers who served there. Even more eye-opening is that the debate over the fundamental issues about the war (nature of the war, definition of battlefield) is being waged outside the military institution. Krepinevich's book is a Johns Hopkins' university press publication. Palmer's and DePuy's rejoinders, although published respectively in a professional military journal (Parameters) and a commercial journal supportive of U.S. Army interests (Army), are outside the traditional military fora for addressing such fundamental questions of strategy. Krepinevich's book is required reading at the Army's Command and General Staff College (CGSC). DePuy's (and not Palmer's) critique is provided in a CGSC student text.

This is the measure of how the basic questions are handled at the intermediate schooling level within the Army.

The middle grade, officer/student is left pretty much to his own devices on how he comes out on the fundamental issues raised, yet left unresolved. In a way this is a microcosm of the still unsettled Vietnam debate itself. As we will see later in Chapter Three, "Methodology," even this institutional attention given to the fundamental questions posed by Krepinevich, DePuy, and Palmer becomes diluted. Very few of the current generation of officers have actually read, understood, and reflected on Krepinevich and the counter-arguments offered by the senior officers with Vietnam experience.

The United States Army Center for Military History inaugurated the United States in Vietnam series in 1983 with its first installment, Advice and Support: The Early Years, authored by Ronald H. Spector.<sup>129</sup> In his concluding chapter entitled "Assessment," Spector summed up the early years of U.S. involvement in Indochina from 1941-1960. Spector found the early Vietnamization efforts (construction of the Army of Vietnam) failed because the U.S. and the chiefs of the U.S. Military Advisory Group (MAAG) concentrated on building an Army geared to resist a Korean-like conventional attack from the north.<sup>130</sup> Spector argued that this fell out of Washington's inability to define military aims in Vietnam during this time period. Although internal subversion was not ignored, the mission for training and equipping

paramilitary forces was assigned outside the MAAG to other U.S. agencies. These findings tend to place Spector firmly in the counterinsurgency camp as long as it is understood that his total assessment was much broader in scope. For example, Spector also cited the politicization of the general officer corps, the South Vietnamese Army's poor security system, divided loyalties within the military, a U.S. advisor short-tour policy, and the limited ability of U.S. advisors to influence their counterparts as equally important as the lack of a counterinsurgency capability.<sup>131</sup>

#### 2d Variation--The United States Government Couldn't Adapt

Robert W. Komer in his book, Bureaucracy at War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict looked at the institutional inertia of the larger U.S. government as the prime cause of U.S. failure.<sup>132</sup> Komer concluded that Vietnam was beyond the ability of American bureaucratic institutions, civilian and military, to adapt to a situation so unique as Vietnam.

After deciding that the major U.S. objective in Vietnam was nation-building, Komer contends that the complete inappropriateness of the organizational repertoires of the U.S. government (also read military services) to achieve this objective doomed the U.S. to failure.<sup>133</sup> In other words, the valid goal of nation-building was

inevitably corrupted by pre-existing programs and capabilities that the armed services could do well: large-scale, combat-oriented operations. Komer concludes his book by advocating the creation of a counterinsurgency agency for the explicit purpose of conducting programs like CORDS in Vietnam.<sup>134</sup>

The Counterinsurgency Argument Writ Large--There is No Proven Counterstrategy for Vietnam

Perhaps the most arresting counter to Summers' and Palmer's theses came from Douglas Pike's PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam (1986). In his chapter on "Why the Communists Won: Military Dau Tranh," Pike argued that the Vietnamese communists conceived, developed, and fielded a new strategy with two components for making war--dau tranh. Pike asserted that there is no known effective counter-strategy.<sup>135</sup> Political dau tranh, the first component, means systematic coercive activity that involves motivation, social organization, communication of ideas, and mobilization of manpower and support.<sup>136</sup> Military dau tranh, the second component, is the revolutionary violence program, that is, military actions and other forms of bloodletting.<sup>137</sup> The fundamental thrust of dau tranh is that these two components must be put together in order to achieve victory. In isolation, each component is not capable of

achieving results. Pike argued that this approach, developed over a period of forty years, was successful against both the French and Americans.<sup>138</sup>

Finally, in one of the most recently published books on Vietnam, Vietnam at War (1988), Lieutenant General Phillip B. Davidson (USA, retired) picked up on Douglas Pike's idea of an invincible North Vietnamese strategy.<sup>139</sup> Davidson, calling the communist revolutionary war strategy a "superior strategy," found that the United States' inability to conceive a counterstrategy, was the principal reason for U.S. defeat and communist victory.

He parted company with Pike over the absolute notion that there could have been no counterstrategy. Davidson, however, offers no counterstrategy and instead recounts how the superior revolutionary war strategy took advantage of U.S. weaknesses and magnified North Vietnam strengths. His book ended on a chilling note reminiscent of Krepinevich by quoting a 1986 joint study which concluded, "The United States does not understand low-intensity conflict nor does it display the capability to adequately defend against it."<sup>140</sup>



## LESSONS SCHOLARSHIP INTO THE 1990s

Although the tenth anniversary of the fall of Saigon sparked a "surge" in Vietnam lessons learned, the postwar debate has not appreciably subsided. Two edited books which are essentially collections of post-Vietnam assessments appeared in 1987.

Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown edited a collection of articles from Parameters: The Journal of The U.S. Army War College, entitled Assessing the Vietnam War.<sup>141</sup> This collection contained an article by Summers entitled "A Strategic Perception of the Vietnam War" which is nothing more than a distillation of his book On Strategy discussed earlier in this chapter. Two articles in this collection contested Summers' thesis from different points of view. John M. Gates' "Vietnam: The Debate Goes On" disputed Summers' idea that the war was conventional in nature and railed against Summers' conclusion that the Viet Cong were merely a "strategic distraction."<sup>142</sup> Gates' basis for this assertion derived from what has been learned about Hanoi's strategy which viewed the Viet Cong, the North Vietnamese Army, and the rural population as collectively crucial to North Vietnam's success.

In the same collection of articles, Hung P. Nguyen, a scholar at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced

International Studies, clarified Gates' idea by explaining the nature of communist strategy. Nguyen detailed an overall communist strategy which entailed a synthesis of main, local, and guerrilla forces.<sup>143</sup> These forces were designed to function in a mutually supporting fashion. Local and guerrilla forces established a logistical and tactical infrastructure which prepared the way for main units (i.e. North Vietnamese regular units) to operate at the time and place of their choosing. Local and guerrilla forces often participated directly in main force attacks, when needed. Based on this more sophisticated view of the enemy offensive strategy, Gates condemned Summers' thesis for "letting the military off the hook," which absolves the military of all responsibility for U.S. national failure in Vietnam.<sup>144</sup>

The second collection of "lessons" articles published in The American War in Vietnam: Lessons, Legacies, and Implications for Future Conflicts (1987) also contained two essays which mount further attacks on Summers' On Strategy.<sup>145</sup> Peter M. Dunn, in his essay, "On Strategy Revisited: Clausewitz and Revolutionary War," accepted Vo Nguyen Giap, and other prominent North Vietnamese who have asserted that Vietnam was primarily a revolutionary conflict.<sup>146</sup> Dunn squared off against Summers' understanding of Clausewitz, pointing out that the Prussian general's

views were still evolving at the time of his premature death. Dunn reminded the reader that Clausewitz himself warned against taking his changing ideas as doctrine. Dunn, by attacking the Clausewitzian analytical framework, shook the very foundation of On Strategy by pointing out that a modern Asian insurgency prosecuted in tropical jungles does not even remotely approximate nineteenth-century European battle-fields. Nor does Clausewitzian analysis accommodate the rough and tumble of American politics in the mid-twentieth century, something entirely alien to the ordered Prussian state. In support of Dunn's thinking, one is reminded of Summers' quotation of Clausewitz that:

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish... the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, or turning it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.<sup>147</sup>

What Dunn is getting at is perhaps something even more basic than deciding between revolutionary or conventional war. Dunn's remarks posed more of a fundamental challenge by calling into question the frame of reference by which war is defined and interpreted. In essence, these remarks attacked the validity and applicability of the theory under which American strategists operate. In fairness, it should be stated that Clausewitz's On War

addressed "people's war" in Book IV, Chapter Twenty-six. However, to pursue this would entail a diversion that could be developed by a separate thesis.

Noel Eggleston, in a separate article in the same collection, also took up the charge against On Strategy. Eggleston repeated many of the objections already mentioned. Like other scholars, he viewed Vietnam as a revolutionary war, and contested Summers' depreciation of the Viet Cong and counterinsurgency. Eggleston's novel contribution to the debate challenged what he terms Summers' "counterfactual determination" that a declaration of war and mobilization were politically possible in 1965 or anytime thereafter. Also, he questioned Summers' minimization of the likelihood of Chinese or Russian intervention. Eggleston's concluding position doubts that American military force, no matter how early or forcefully applied, could not have won over North Vietnam's determination.

#### CONCLUSION

The "lessons" literature on Vietnam is extensive; its sheer volume tends to discourage in-depth inquiries or fresh looks at a subject already drowned in ink. Since the fall of Saigon some fifteen years ago there has been a steady progression and evolution of thought on Vietnam.

Moving from an initial self-condemnation of the U.S. role, American writers have since authored insights that offer a variety and range of interpretations on what alternative strategies could have been pursued. Some authors have consciously parted company with their contemporaries in concluding that Vietnam's "salvation" was from the very inception, well beyond America's grasp. The alternative strategies at the core of the "means" debate are best defined by the conventional and counterinsurgent schools of thought. Both these schools of thought share some common assumptions. They are: (1) American policy and objectives in Vietnam were sound and achievable by military and other means, and (2) American military means, employed in some better fashion, might have brought victory. The counterinsurgent school seems to take the more broad view of the nature of the conflict in Vietnam while the conventional school tends to characterize the war in more traditional terms.

Despite the division of the postwar debate into "camps," there has been a perceptible movement away from the belief that the early, unrestricted application of U.S. military force would have achieved U.S. objectives. As the postwar scholarship continues to grow, more writers have concluded that Vietnam was a revolutionary war as opposed to a conventional one. The mounting amount of material which

has called into question Summers' thesis from On Strategy testifies to this development. There is also a distinct trend in the postwar scholarship which focuses more on the Armed Forces share of responsibility for American failure in Vietnam. Palmer's The 25-Year War clearly leans in this direction despite his criticism of Krepinevich as noted above. Douglas Kinnard's and Bruce Palmer's recognition of the political nature of the war, and the selection of instruments to wage it, also marks a departure from what Westmoreland, Dave Richard Palmer, and Harry Summers have offered the postwar debate.

One unforeseen aspect of the postwar debate which has surfaced concerns the viability of Clausewitzian theory as the touchstone for military strategy in the context of revolutionary war. This is not to say that the postwar debate is going to cast Clausewitz into the dustbin of history. Clausewitzian dictums, as interpreted or misunderstood by American officers, heavily influence American military thought. However, with the advent of revolutionary war and the need to devise counterstrategies to frustrate its ends, Clausewitz may not have all the theoretical "capital" necessary to think about revolutionary war.

In support of this it is noteworthy that Douglas Pike's PAVN: The People's Army of Vietnam, which supplied a coherent explanation of North Vietnamese strategy, was not

published until 1986.<sup>148</sup> Pike, an Asia scholar, notes this gap in scholarship about the war. Observing that a vast amount of material has recently become available from Hanoi, Pike remarks on the lateness of the hour at which Americans seriously started examining "what the other side was doing, what they intended, what their strategy was, what their doctrine was. There was never any serious effort to address this within the American establishment."<sup>149</sup>

The sheer volume of the literature shows that Vietnam has not passed from the American consciousness and is still very much with us. However, unlike World War II or Korea, what Vietnam means to Americans has yet to be settled and probably won't be in the short term. The nation and the military as an institution will most likely have to live with this operative reality as it moves into the next century and U.S. military actions such as the Libyan raid, the Grenada invasion, and the Panama intervention distance us from the divisiveness of the Vietnam War.

Given this, I will now turn to an examination of how the Army has come to grips with the "lessons" literature on the Vietnam War. Still looming out there is Douglas Pike's startling assertion that no effective counter-strategy has been developed to answer the communist concept of dau tranh. That a counter-strategy has not developed may or may not be a reflection of how the Army itself sees the operative

strategic-military lessons of Vietnam. Nevertheless, how the Army has adopted or consciously opted to avoid any strategic-military conclusions about Vietnam fifteen years later may tell us something about how the U.S. is prepared to deal with future Third World conflicts in which revolutionary war plays a role.



## CHAPTER 2

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Richard M. Nixon, No More Vietnams (New York: Arbor House, 1985), 9.

<sup>2</sup> A representative sample of symposia, seminars and colloquia on the Vietnam War from which an edited collection of articles was published on the "lessons" of Vietnam would be:

The 1973-74 Colloquium on "The Military Lessons of the Vietnamese War" held at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. This early post-war seminar had a small representation of former U.S. decision makers such as Ambassador Robert Komer, General William Westmoreland, MG Edward Lansdale, and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge. Conspicuously absent were other key policy makers such as former national security advisors during the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations like McGeorge Bundy, and W.W. Rostow, as well as Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretaries of Defense Robert McNamara and Clark Clifford. Maxwell Taylor, as a former Chairman of the JCS and Ambassador to Vietnam, was ironically absent also. See The Lessons of Vietnam, ed. W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson D. Frizzell (New York: Crane, Russak, 1977).

These absences continued as time passed in the post-war period. Almost no seminar participants attending the January 1983 seminar at the Smithsonian Institution sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars were former policy makers (see Vietnam as History: Ten Years After the Paris Peace Accords, Peter Braestrup, editor (Washington, D.C.: University Press, 1984)). This phenomena holds true for the U.S. Army Center for Military History's sponsored "Second Indochina War Symposium" held at Airlie, Virginia in November 1984 (see Second Indochina War Symposium: Papers and Commentaries, John Schlight, editor, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1984). Finally, see the list of participants on the two panels for Vietnam at the Southeast Conference Association for Asian Studies held at North Carolina State University in April 1986 in The American War in Vietnam: Lessons, Legacies, and Implications for Future Conflicts, ed. Lawrence E. Grinter and Peter M. Dunn (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1987).

The Social Science Department at the United States Military Academy held a conference of scholars, journalists, political figures, and present and former government officials and military officers at West Point in June 1985. As a result of the conference, another "lessons" collection was published entitled, Democracy, Strategy and Vietnam: Implications for American Policymaking, George K. Osborn, and others, editors (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> McNamara's books The Essence of Security: Reflections In Office (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) offers no "lessons" on policy or objectives. The titles of two of his other works deal with development and nuclear issues: One Hundred Countries, Two Billion People (New York: Praeger, 1973) and Blundering into Disaster: Surviving the First Century of the Nuclear Age (New York: Pantheon, 1987). McNamara's most recent work on a foreign policy theme, Out of the Cold (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989) does not offer any insights as to the "lessons" of Vietnam.

The only time that McNamara has spoken out on the Vietnam War was when he was summoned as a witness to General Westmoreland's suit against CBS that went to trial in 1984. McNamara's testimony generated some 400 pages of transcript, but the questions put to him by CBS attorneys focused on the narrow issue of inflation of enemy strengths. Some of his views on the war saw the light of day, but he has yet to give a comprehensive treatment of the subject. See Jonathan Alter, "McNamara Recalls Vietnam," Newsweek 103 (28 May 1984): 31.

<sup>4</sup> Taylor, Swords and Plowshares, 399.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy (New York: Macmillan, 1984), 32.

<sup>6</sup> David Fromkin and James Chace, "The Lessons of Vietnam?," Foreign Affairs 63 (Spring 1985): 732.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "Vietnam Reappraised," International Security 6 (Summer 1981): 14. Haig's going to Moscow represents his identification of the enemy's (North Vietnamese) center of gravity. U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5 Operations (Washington, DC: GPO, 1986) describes the enemy center of gravity as "that characteristic, capability, or locality from which the force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight." Clausewitz defined it as "the hub and power of movement upon which everything

depends" (see Appendix B, FM 100-5, page 179). However, as Lieutenant Colonel Frederick M. Downey and Steven Metz note in their article, "Centers of Gravity and Strategic Planning," Military Review 68 (April 1988), 22-33, the FM 100-5 definition focuses on the operational level of war and neglects to give a strategist some idea of how to go about pinning down the enemy's strategic center of gravity. The continuation of the war, even after LBJ's arm-twisting of Kosygin and Kosygin's failed overtures to the North Vietnamese, support Metz's and Downey's idea that the extension of the idea to the strategic level applied in Vietnam's case.

8 Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College, 1982), 55-56. This point of view characterizes most of Summers' writings. For example see Summers' "A Strategic Perception of the Vietnam War" published in Lloyd J. Matthews' & Dale E. Brown's Assessing The Vietnam War (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1987), 39-40; see also Harry G. Summers, Jr., "Defense Without Purpose," Society 21 (November/December 1983): 14.

9 Hung P. Nguyen, "Communist Offensive Strategy and the Defense of South Vietnam," in Assessing The Vietnam War, 101-119.

10 Nixon, No More Vietnams, 18.

11 George W. Ball, "Block That Vietnam Myth," New York Times, May 19, 1985) sec. 4, p.21;1.

12 Ball, "Block that Vietnam Myth," 21:1.

13 Nixon, No More Vietnams, 181

14 Nixon, No More Vietnams, 47

15 Nixon, No More Vietnams, 47

16 Nixon, No More Vietnams, 55

17 Nixon, No More Vietnams, 82

18 Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, The Lessons of Vietnam: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 99th Cong., 1st sess., April 29, 1985, 20-21.

19 Congress, House, Lessons of Vietnam Hearing, 21.

20 Congress, House, Lessons of Vietnam Hearing, 25.

21 Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Causes, Origins, and Lessons of the Vietnam War: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 92d Cong., 2d sess., May 10, 1972, 70.

22 Congress, Senate, Lessons of the Vietnam War; May 10, 1972, 71.

23 Robert S. McNamara, as quoted in Jonathon Alter's "McNamara Recalls Vietnam," Newsweek 103 (May 28, 1984): 31.

24 David T. Twining "Vietnam and the Six Criteria for the Use of Military Force," in Assessing the Vietnam War, 222. Twining notes that "the quintessential significance of these standards is their role as a catharsis of past debates, doubts, and national trauma. Because of this thoughtful and far-reaching analysis, these six tests provide positive guidance and direction for meeting future challenges to our security and national interests. The uneasy legacy of Vietnam, more than any single factor or event in this century, has demanded this reappraisal."

25 The advent of the Weinberger doctrine in 1984 comes pretty close to a key point made by Major Dave Petraeus in his doctoral thesis entitled "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam," 11. Petraeus states that "despite the philosophical disagreement over the relevance of the past to the present, however, there is considerable evidence that lessons and analogies drawn from history often play an important part in policy decisions." David Twining's article makes it clear that the Weinberger Doctrine ".... was personally written by Mr. Weinberger, endorsed by the National Security Council and discussed with, and approved by, the President." David T. Twining, "Vietnam and the Six Criteria for the Use of Military Force," in Assessing the Vietnam War, 221. The best works that clearly establish the influence of "history" on policy makers are Ernest R. May's "Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy, and Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, Thinking in Time (New York: The Free Press, 1986).

26 Fromkin and Chace, "The Lessons of Vietnam?": 726.

27 Fromkin and Chace, "The Lessons of Vietnam?": 733-4.

28 Fromkin and Chace, "The Lessons of Vietnam?": 732.

- 29 George C. Herring, America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam 1950-1975 (New York: Wiley, 1979), 264-5. Fox Butterfield arrived at the same thematic characterization of America's early attitude towards the Vietnam War. However, Butterfield's use of the word "amnesia" gets followed by a sense of conscious volition to forget Vietnam. He writes, ".... Americans went into a trance of collective amnesia. The Vietnam War was such an agonizing, divisive and baffling experience that we somehow resolved simply to forget it." See Fox Butterfield, "The New Vietnam Scholarship" The New York Times Magazine, 13 February 1983, 26.
- 30 Gary R. Hess, "The Military Perspective on Strategy in Vietnam: Harry Summers' On Strategy and Bruce Palmer's The 25-Year War," Diplomatic History 10 (Winter 1986): 91.
- 31 Hess, "The Military Perspective On Strategy," 91.
- 32 Hess, "The Military Perspective On Strategy," 91.
- 33 David Halberstam, The Best and The Brightest (New York: Random House, 1969).
- 34 John M. Taylor, General Maxwell Taylor: The Sword and the Pen (New York, Doubleday, 1989), 378. Taylor notes in his father's biography in a footnote on this same page that David Halberstam had allegedly conducted over 500 interviews in order to write The Best and The Brightest. One of the persons he failed to interview was General Maxwell Taylor. This proves to be somewhat significant since Halberstam devotes considerable material in his book to Taylor's recommendations and decisions on Vietnam.
- 35 Frances FitzGerald, Fire In The Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam (Boston: Little Brown, 1972).
- 36 Frances FitzGerald, Fire in the Lake, 590.
- 37 Fox Butterfield, "The New Vietnam Scholarship," New York Times Magazine, 13 February 1983, 26-32.
- 38 Taylor, General Maxwell Taylor: The Sword and the Pen, 378.
- 39 Herring, America's Longest War, 270.
- 40 Leslie H. Gelb and Richard K. Betts, The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1979).

- 41 Larry Berman, Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam (New York: Norton, 1982).
- 42 Herring, America's Longest War, 133.
- 43 William C. Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976), 410.
- 44 George C. Herring, "American Strategy in Vietnam: The Postwar Debate," Military Affairs 61 (April 1982): 58. The full citations for Palmer's and Sharp's books are Dave Richard Palmer, Summons of The Trumpet: U.S.-Vietnam in Perspective (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1978); Ulysses S. Grant Sharp, Strategy For Defeat: Vietnam in Retrospect (San Rafael: Presidio, 1978).
- 45 Herring, "American Strategy in Vietnam" : 58.
- 46 As quoted in Earl C. Ravenal's Never Again: Learning From America's Foreign Policy Failures (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 71.
- 47 Herring, "American Strategy in Vietnam," : 59.
- 48 Robert Komer, "Was There Another Way?," in The Lessons of Vietnam, ed. W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson D. Frizzel (New York: Crane, Russak & Co., 1977), 212.
- 49 Komer, "Was There Another Way?," 212.
- 50 Komer, "Was There Another Way?," 212.
- 51 Komer, "Was There Another Way?," 213 and 222.
- 52 Guenter Lewy, America In Vietnam (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 437-8.
- 53 Lewy, America in Vietnam, 439.
- 54 Sir Robert Thompson, No Exit From Vietnam (New York: David McKay, 1970), 63-64.
- 55 Robert E. Osgood, Limited War Revisited (Boulder: Westview, 1979), 46 and 49.
- 56 Osgood, Limited War Revisited, 37.
- 57 Osgood, Limited War Revisited, 51.
- 58 Quoted in Russell F. Weigley's, The American Way of War (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 5.

- 59 Norman Podhoretz, The Present Danger (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), 28.
- 60 Norman Podhoretz, The Present Danger, 50. Podhoretz cites Morgenthau's articles published in Commentary during 1961 and 1962. "Asia: The American Algeria" appeared in Commentary during July 1961, and "Vietnam-Another Korea?" appeared in Commentary during May 1962. Former Acting Chief of Staff of The Army, Bruce Palmer, relates how his War College Class of 1950 had studied U.S. policy in Southeast Asia and had opposed any U.S. military intervention there. See Bruce Palmer, Jr., The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1984).
- 61 George K. Osborn and others, eds., Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam: Implications for American Policymaking (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), 331.
- 62 Osborn and others, Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam, 331.
- 63 Osborn and others, Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam, 331. In the footnote to support this, the authors cite a 1 July 1965 memorandum for Undersecretary of State Ball to President Johnson.
- 64 Norman Podhoretz, The Present Danger (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), and Why We Were in Vietnam (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).
- 65 Robert W. Tucker, The Purposes of American Power: An Essay On National Security (New York: Praeger, 1981).
- 66 Norman Podhoretz, Why We Were in Vietnam, 210.
- 67 Norman Podhoretz, The Present Danger, 67-85.
- 68 Norman Podhoretz, Why We Were in Vietnam, 171.
- 69 Norman Podhoretz, Why We Were in Vietnam, 58.
- 70 Norman Podhoretz, Why We Were in Vietnam, 80.
- 71 Norman Podhoretz, Why We Were in Vietnam, 169-170.
- 72 Robert W. Tucker, The Purposes of American Power, 161, and Podhoretz, The Present Danger, 28.
- 73 Podhoretz, Why We Were in Vietnam, 196-197.

- 74 Robert W. Tucker, The Purposes of American Power, 161.
- 75 Robert W. Tucker, The Purposes of American Power, 161.
- 76 Harry P. Ball, Of Responsible Command: A History of The U.S. Army War College (Carlisle Barracks: United States Army War College, 1983), 478.
- 77 Ball, Of Responsible Command, 478.
- 78 Ball, Of Responsible Command, 478.
- 79 Ball, Of Responsible Command, 479.
- 80 See Russell F. Weigley's, The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy. There are some striking similarities between Weigley's book and the study's findings.
- 81 BDM Corporation, A Study of the Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam: Omnibus Executive Summary (Washington, D.C.: BDM; 1980), EX-3.
- 82 BDM Corporation, A Study of the Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, EX-3. For a good definition and discussion of dau tranh see Douglas Pike, PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam (Novato: Presidio Press, 1986), 215-217.
- 83 BDM Corporation, A Study of the Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, EX-6.
- 84 BDM Corporation, A Study of the Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, EX-6.
- 85 Gary R. Hess, "The Military Perspective on Strategy in Vietnam: Harry G. Summers' On Strategy and Bruce Palmer's The 25-Year War," Diplomatic History 10 (Winter 1986): 92-93.
- 86 Hess, "The Military Perspective on Strategy," : 92-93.
- 87 Hess, "The Military Perspective on Strategy," : 92-93.



88 Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy: A Critical Assessment of The Vietnam War (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1982), Bruce Palmer, Jr., The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam (Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1984), Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., The Army and Vietnam (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins 1986), Douglas Pike, PAVN: The People's Army of Vietnam (Novato: Presidio Press, 1986), Phillip B. Davidson, Vietnam at War: The History 1946-1975 (London: Sidgewick & Jackson, 1988).

89 Hess, "The Military Perspective on Strategy," 96.

90 Summers, On Strategy, 56-57.

91 Summers, On Strategy, 1-4.

92 Summers, On Strategy, 56-57.

93 Summers, On Strategy, 36.

94 Summers, On Strategy, 34.

95 Summers, On Strategy, 47. Summers' arguments conveniently overlook the domestic political dimension presented earlier by Betts. American presidents consistently made "middle of the road" choices.

96 Summers, On Strategy, 8.

97 Summers, On Strategy, 22.

98 Summers, On Strategy, 54-55.

99 Summers, On Strategy, 48.

100 Summers, On Strategy, 70.

101 Osborn and others, Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam, 136.

102 Osborn and others, Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam, 136.

103 Palmer, The 25-Year War, 190.

104 Palmer, The 25-Year War, 191-200.

105 Palmer, The 25-Year War, 34-35; 45-46.

- 106 Palmer, The 25-Year War, 8-9.
- 107 Bruce Palmer, Jr., review of On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War, by Harry G. Summers, Jr., in Parameters: Journal of the U.S. Army War College 11 (December 1981): 90-91.
- 108 Bruce Palmer, Jr., review of On Strategy in Parameters: 90-91.
- 109 Palmer, The 25-Year War, 29-30.
- 110 Cecil B. Currey, "Preparing for the Past," Military Review 69 (January 1989): 2, 10.
- 111 Peter Maslowski, "Army Values and American Values," Military Review 70 (April 1990): 17.
- 112 Maslowski, "Army Values," 18.
- 113 Douglas Kinnard, The War Managers (Wayne: Avery, 1985).
- 114 Kinnard, The War Managers, 24.
- 115 Kinnard, The War Managers, 24.
- 116 Kinnard, The War Managers, 25. See also the discussion of the twenty-two separate rationales to explain the American involvement in Vietnam by Hugh M. Arnold, "Official Justifications for America's Role in Indochina, 1949-67," Asian Affairs 3 (September-October 1975): 31-48.
- 117 Kinnard, The War Managers, 45.
- 118 Kinnard, The War Managers, 157-82.
- 119 Kinnard, The War Managers, 44.
- 120 Andrew F. Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1986), 4-7.
- 121 Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam, 274-275.
- 122 Population control is a nebulous term. If one consults Douglas Pike's Viet Cong: The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), the National Liberation Front's (NLF) Viet Cong cadres objectives went beyond mere population control. Pike argues that the NLF's single objective was a re-ordering of South Vietnamese society accomplished through agitation/propaganda teams. The penetration and manipulation of traditional

Vietnamese village social organizations transformed them into new political/social entities that carried the revolution's message and organization. Functional liberation associations (farmers, mothers, youths, intellectuals) rooted the insurgent message and cause at the base of Vietnamese society--the village. Therefore, "population control" inadequately describes the political/social reorganization of Vietnamese society being effected by the NLF. See Pike, Viet Cong, 119-153.

123 Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam, 56.

124 Harry G. Summers, Jr., "The Academic Gurus of Guerrilla War Are Gaining Ground Again," Kansas City Times 15 June 1989, 22.

125 Harry G. Summers, Jr., "The Academic Gurus," 22. Summers' words in this article are quoted in Chapter One of this thesis (see page 7).

126 General William E. DePuy, (U.S. Army retired), review of The Army and Vietnam, by Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., in Army (September 1986): 77-78.

127 General Bruce Palmer, Jr., (U.S. Army, retired), review of The Army and Vietnam by Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., in Parameters: Journal of the U.S. Army War College 16 (Autumn 1986): 83-85.

128 Palmer, review of The Army and Vietnam, by Krepinevich, reviewed in Parameters, 84-85.

129 Ronald H. Spector, Advice and Support: The Early Years (Washington, D.C.: The United States Army Center of Military History, 1983).

130 Ronald H. Spector, Advice and Support, 375-379.

131 Ronald H. Spector, Advice and Support, 375-379.

132 Robert W. Komer, Bureaucracy At War: U.S. Performance in The Vietnam Conflict (Boulder: Westview, 1986).

133 Osborn and others, Democracy, Strategy and Vietnam, 331.

134 Osborn and others, Democracy, Strategy and Vietnam, 331.

135 Douglas Pike, PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam, 215.

- 136 Pike, PAVN, 217.
- 137 Pike, PAVN, 215.
- 138 Pike, PAVN, 215.
- 139 Phillip B. Davidson, Vietnam At War: The History 1946-1975 (London: Sidgewick & Jackson, 1988).
- 140 Phillip B. Davidson, Vietnam at War, 811.
- 141 Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, Assessing The Vietnam War (London: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1987).
- 142 John M. Gates, "Vietnam: The Debate Goes On," in Assessing the Vietnam War, 46-49.
- 143 Hung P. Nguyen, "Communist Offensive Strategy and the Defense of South Vietnam," in Assessing the Vietnam War, 104.
- 144 John M. Gates, "Vietnam: the Debate Goes On," in Assessing the Vietnam War, 54-55.
- 145 Lawrence E. Grinter and Peter M. Dunn, eds., The American War in Vietnam: Lessons, Legacies, and Implications for Future Conflicts (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1987).
- 146 Peter M. Dunn, "On Strategy Revisited: Clausewitz and Revolutionary War," in The American War in Vietnam, 10.
- 147 Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy, 53.
- 148 It should be noted that as early as 1966, Pike had written Viet Cong: the Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966). Pike's Chapter Five extensively covers the Vietnamese concept of struggle--dau tranh.
- 149 John Schlight, editor, Second Indochina War Symposium: Papers and Commentary (Washington, D.C.: Center For Military History, 1986), 270.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The real need for an exhaustive analysis of the [Vietnam] war is to help us learn how to respond to low-intensity military operations that conceivably may surge into existence in the future. We lack an answer to the question, *What was Vietnam, in its essence, as an American military experience?* (italics in original) Even if we wanted to, we could not turn away from the answer to that question.

then BG John R. Galvin  
Parameters: Journal of the U.S. Army  
War College, March 1981

Chapter Two, "Review of Literature," provided a very general feeling for the current state of the Vietnam "lessons" literature. The methodology will move the reader to a focused examination of the legacy adopted or avoided by the Army. With General Galvin's remarks as the starting point, I will now examine how the Army has assessed the strategic-military legacy of the Vietnam War.

In order to get at an answer, I must construct a methodology. I will rely on an examination of three principal sources and a survey instrument. First, professional military journals; second, doctrinal

publications; and third, curricula of the intermediate and senior Army service schools.

Finally, since legacies have much to do with existing attitudes in the officer corps, I will examine how different generations assimilated the Vietnam experience. From the previous chapter, we already have a general idea of how the senior Army leadership military viewed the war. Additionally, a survey of the attitudes of current mid-level officers, largely without Vietnam experience vis a vis the schools of thought, will be presented.

#### **IN DEFENSE OF THE METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN**

The methodology's strength lies in its breadth. Articles published in professional military journals do not represent official Army or Department of Defense positions. Nevertheless, they indicate the intellectual pulse-beat and orientation of the profession.

Doctrine represents the published pronouncements and officially sanctioned publications of an armed service. Doctrine states how the Army will employ its personnel, develop its force structure, and train and equip itself. It entails a relatively coherent body of policies and generalizations about the employment of force developed through experience or theory. Doctrine represents the best

available thought on the conduct of conflict. In essence, it is the intellectual glue by which the Army conceives of combat and then decides how to prosecute it. The Vietnam War will therefore, in some way, manifest itself in the distillation of theory and experience as embodied in current doctrine. This will provide evidence of the war's strategic-military legacy.

Service schools impart doctrine, training, and education to military professionals. The investigation will focus on the intermediate and senior level service school levels. Intermediate service schools, such as the Army's Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, provide a year of in-residence study for mid-career officers, majors, and senior captains, with ten to fifteen years of commissioned service.

However, rank of officers is not the key variable. For the first time in an officer's career, CGSC formally focuses on the operational and strategic levels of warfare. His basic branch schools, usually officers' basic and advanced courses, trained him in the fundamental tactical, technical, and managerial aspects of his profession. But, the intermediate service school both trains and educates the military officer. The educational aspect of intermediate schools forces the officer to think and conceptualize at the strategic and national levels.

Senior service schools include the Army War College and National War College. They devote a considerable amount of their curricula hours to national policy, national security policy and strategy, and national military policy and strategy subjects. Senior service schools also stress service level and Department of Defense level management. Accordingly, the curricula of these military educational institutions represent the appropriate target for investigating strategic legacies of the Vietnam War.

Finally, no assessment of a "legacy" would be complete without a measurement of attitudes. This investigation will focus on the attitudes of the officer corps, with a detailed focus on how the post-Vietnam generation of officers understand Vietnam's strategic legacy. A survey of mid-level officers without Vietnam combat experience conducted at the Command and General Staff College will flesh this out.

The divisive nature of the Vietnam War and the multiplication of the schools of thought will bedevil any methodological design. Moreover, institutions change over time with the influx and exits of key organization personnel. However, certain enduring testaments exist as to what the institution has set down for itself. They will record and pass on the distillation of a common experience. The publications of military authors in their professional



journals, the best available "thought" as evidenced in Army doctrine, and prevailing officer attitudes, collectively offer the opportunity to arrive at conclusions.

### PROFESSIONAL MILITARY JOURNALS

Serious consideration of strategy begins at the intermediate service school level and continues as the primary focus of senior service colleges. Therefore, the two professional journals associated with these institutions will be examined. Parameters: The Journal of the U.S. Army War College (hereinafter called Parameters) is a quarterly journal with essays and articles from both military and civilian professionals. Each edition of Parameters has about seven to twelve articles. Each edition contains approximately one hundred pages. The Command and General Staff College's Military Review also publishes a monthly journal, including essays and articles from both military and civilian professionals. Each edition of Military Review contains about seven to twelve articles. It also amounts to approximately one hundred pages. Both Parameters and Military Review feature special sections for book reviews or summaries of important studies relevant to the military profession. Parameters has a special section entitled, "View From the Fourth Estate" which features relevant

articles by civilian academicians, writers, or media personalities of stature who comment on military and national security affairs.

**PARAMETERS: Journal of the United States War College**

From 1975 until June 1989, approximately 470 articles or essays have been published in Parameters. The following chart depicts the principal thematic content of each article. Numbers in parentheses indicate articles on Vietnam.

Table 3-1 Parameters Thematic Content Assessment

I. HISTORICAL THEMES	78 (15)	VII. FOREIGN COUNTRY POL-MIL OBJECTIVES, CAPABILITIES POLICIES, PERSPECTIVES	34
II. U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, NATIONAL POWER, PURPOSE, NAT SECURITY	73 (3)	VIII. SOVIET UNION/WARSAW PACT POLITICAL-MILITARY POLICY OBJECTIVES, STRATEGY	31
III. U.S. STRATEGIC, STRATEGIC-MILITARY	70 (12)	IX. WEAPONS, WEAPONS SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY, WEAPONS SYSTEM OR TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS	15
IV. GLOBAL THEMES, PHILOSOPHICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL, CONGRESS, MIL FAMILY GENERAL, NON-MILITARY	58	X. MILITARY REFORM	9
V. ETHICS, LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, MORAL(ITY)	44	XI. MILITARY-MEDIA-PRESS	6
VI. NATO, OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR, ALLIANCE THEMES	44	XII. WOMEN IN COMBAT	4
		XIII. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS	4

As would be expected from a senior service school's professional journal, Parameters focuses on issues of national policy, national security, and national military policies (143 of 470 or 30.4 percent). But only fifteen of

143 essays (10.4 percent) gave some attention to the strategic questions posed by the Vietnam War. The foreign policy, national security policy, and national military category essay themes (Category II) cluster around detente and nuclear issues (deterrence, first use, capabilities), and national security policy and strategy issues relating to the Soviet Union and China. This category also has a sizeable representation on policy and strategy issues relating to bilateral or regional security interests of the United States.

In contrast, Category II (U.S. Strategic, Strategic-Military Themes) contains seventy articles. Thirteen (18.5 percent) have been devoted to strategic themes on the Vietnam War. Besides Vietnam strategic assessments, this category routinely addressed nuclear strategy, strategic nuclear defense, U.S. strategy or strategic interests in a particular country, region or resource. Finally, this overall category also looked at strategic theory, mostly Clausewitz, and the development of American strategy.

The historical category (Category I) contains seventy-eight articles. It devotes sixteen to Vietnam. The non-Vietnam essays in this category examined U.S. military leaders in the Civil War, First World War, Inter-war years, and the Second World War (nine essays). Two articles dealt with American military leaders (Taylor, Westmoreland) of the

Vietnam era. The historical articles on the Vietnam era began as early as 1979. They looked at Vietnam from a soldier's perspective. Also, they reviewed books written on Vietnam history, reviewed planning for American ground combat operations, and rebutted criticism of poor cohesion in Army units during Vietnam.

Overall, of the 470 articles published, thirty had Vietnam as a principal theme (6.3 percent). Of all the articles published, twelve articles or essays have offered some type of strategic assessment (2.5 percent).

Postwar strategic assessments appearing in Parameters have been relatively random. A single essay first appearing in 1977, two in 1978, none in 1979, and one during 1980. Harry G. Summers' "A Strategic Perception of the Vietnam War," a distillation of On Strategy, appeared in Parameters during June 1983. Summers' essay marks the Army's first formal participation in the postwar debate with a comprehensive strategic treatise which addressed Vietnam.

The remainder of the strategic assessments offered in Parameters were largely rejoinders to On Strategy. These responses started in 1984 and then fell off after 1986. It should be noted that those authors who contested Summers' thesis were civilians. No one in the military profession authored a reply to Summers' ideas in the military journal fora until 1989. However, (Major) Andrew F. Krepinevich's

The Army and Vietnam appeared in 1986 as a Johns Hopkins University Press publication, but has not been seen in a condensed form in either Parameters or Military Review.

That other military authors writing for Parameters haven't challenged Summers does not tell the full story. Major David H. Petraeus cited three general influences Vietnam has left with America's senior military officers. First, Vietnam reminded the military of the finite limits of public support for U.S. involvement in a protracted conflict.<sup>1</sup> Second, senior military leaders developed a heightened awareness that civilian officials are responsive to influences other than the objective conditions of the battlefield.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the military recognized the limits of military power in solving certain types of problems in world affairs.<sup>3</sup> Petraeus, following Ernest May's ideas from "Lessons" of the Past, urged that these lessons not be over-extended and applied without considerable discrimination.<sup>4</sup>

Petraeus' Autumn 1986 article marked the last strategic assessment of Vietnam. Petraeus made one additional contribution to Parameters during Winter 1987. "Korea, The Never-Again Club and Indochina" highlighted American military leaders' post-Korean war belief that the U.S. should not intervene in Asia unless it was prepared to fight an all-out war. It stressed military leaders' heightened awareness of the national commitment and mobilization

necessary to accomplish the mission before public support eroded. However, as Petraeus pointed out, political pressures for "not losing another country to communism" and the activist Kennedy Administration brought about the final demise of the "lessons" of Korea and the Never-Again Club.

# MILITARY REVIEW: The Professional Journal of the U.S. Army

From 1975 until June 1989, Military Review published approximately 1,400 articles or essays. Table 3-2 depicts the major categories of principal thematic content.

TABLE 3-2

## PRINCIPAL THEMATIC CONTENT - MILITARY REVIEW 1975-1990

I. HISTORY, BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY	252 (15)	VII. NATO, INTEROPERABILITY	64
II. DOCTRINE, TACTICS, TECHNIQUES, PROCEDURES, FM 100-5, AIRLAND BATTLE, FORCE MOD, C2, C3CM, TRAINING, MOUT, DESERT WAR	184	VIII. FOREIGN COUNTRIES, FOREIGN ARMY ORGANIZATION, TRAINING, TRADITIONS, CAPABILITIES	61
III. SOVIET UNION/WARSAW PACT/PRC POLICY, STRATEGY, OMGS, CAPABILITIES, USSR IN AFGHANISTAN, TACTICAL UNITS	167	IX. WEAPONS/TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT, CAPABILITIES IMPLICATIONS	51
IV. LEADERSHIP, COMMAND, DECISION MAKING, ETHICS, MORALITY, PROFESSIONALISM, MILITARY LAW, JUSTICE	146	X. FOREIGN POLICY, U.S. REGIONAL DEFENSE THREATS, MILITARY TO MILITARY RELATIONS, GENERAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEMES	59
V. STRATEGY, STRATEGIC THEMES	79 (10)	XI. LOGISTICS, CSS, LOGISTICAL SUPPORT, CSS FORCE STRUCTURE, LOG SUPPORT FOR AIRLAND BATTLE	41
VI. MILITARY PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL POLICIES, OFFICER OR MILITARY EDUCATION, MILITARY LANGUAGE AND WRITING, SOLDIER'S ISSUES, OPMS, STRESS, CASUALTIES	74	XII. OTHER, INSIGHTS, TERRORISM MEDIA, RESERVE FORCES, GENERAL THEMES,	225
		XIII. LIC/COUNTERINSURGENCY	43

As was the case for Parameters, the intermediate service school's professional journal focused heavily on military history, U.S. doctrine and tactics, the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, and the People's Republic of China's military forces, capabilities, and tactics (see Table 3-2). Leadership, command, decision making, and management at the tactical unit level has also commanded the attention of Military Review's audience.

Essays on Vietnam are noticeably absent from the Military Review. Professor Russell F. Weigley noticed this phenomenon in the early 1980s in his article, "Reflections on "Lessons" From Vietnam."<sup>5</sup> To support his argument that the American military pushed aside its unpleasant Indochina experience, he surveyed the pages of the Military Review. Weigley found that in 1977, soon after the close of the Vietnam War, the Military Review published no critical assessment of unconventional war throughout the year (1977). In contrast, there was a major emphasis on historical and prospective studies looking toward large-scale conventional conflicts on the World War II model.<sup>6</sup> Weigley returned to survey the professional essays submitted in 1981 and 1982 to find more attention given to conventional World War II themes--America's "last satisfactory war." In 1984, Weigley found little critical study of the Indochina War. Nor did

he find much acknowledgement of the possibility of similar wars in the future.

Weigley's remarks of some six years ago require some additional comments for the purpose of balance. First, it should be pointed out that as early as 1977, the Military Review published an essay on how the North Vietnamese engineered a socio-political revolution in rural Vietnam. Roger Darling's "The Unique Capacities of North Vietnam in Achieving Peasant Participation in Revolution" appeared in the January 1977 edition.<sup>7</sup> Darling's article provided a powerful explanation of how North Vietnam's strategy for socio-political change built upon the traditional Vietnamese village ethos.<sup>8</sup>

However, this is only one article in Military Review's postwar repertoire that gives full treatment to the enemy's strategy or organizational techniques. The pages of the 1975-1989 editions of Military Review carry discussions of Soviet conventional and special unit force structure, tactics, and missions. Yet no article addressed the synthetic enemy local, main, and regular force unit strategy from the Vietnam War. Military officers would have to turn to Douglas Pike's PAVN: The People's Army in Vietnam or find the single article in Parameters by Hung P. Nguyen which dealt with communist offensive strategies.<sup>9</sup> The concept and components of dau tranh were conspicuously absent from the



pages of Military Review. Other strategic concepts such as nuclear deterrence or Soviet conventional force strategy received more than adequate attention. However, the North Vietnamese employed dau tranh against both the French and the United States since the late 1940s. Strange that it still eluded the attention of military scholars.

In lieu of articles on Vietnam, Military Review has been the battleground for what may be generously termed "the great LIC debate" (low-intensity conflict). Starting in about 1985, several essays questioned the Army's ability to embrace low-intensity conflict. Essays and counter-essays frequently subjected low-intensity conflict to definitional semantics. These types of articles continued to appear through 1986 and 1987. The Military Review dedicated special editions to low-intensity conflict in January 1988 and September 1988. The majority of articles appearing in the February 1989 edition (and again in January 1990) addressed low-intensity conflict. Also, in the future, the Military Review will dedicate one of its twelve monthly issues to low-intensity conflict. References to Vietnam and other situations in which insurgency has figured prominently frequently appeared in the majority of these essays.

The low-intensity conflict debate was curiously played out in the same professional journal that had devoted scant attention to the Army's institutional experience with

insurgency in Indochina. The majority of these Military Review articles contained references or devoted pages to Vietnam to support their particular point of view. However, they could not draw on an institutional standard that had analyzed or interpreted Vietnam's strategic legacy. In a way, it was like a doctor arriving at a prognosis without having done a full diagnosis.

Professor Weigley would be surprised to learn that the Military Review did devote an edition with its essays centering on the Vietnam theme in January 1989. However, Dr. Weigley would be less than pleased to discover that even this edition fell well short of delivering a full critical study of the Vietnam War. The January 1989 edition contained some nine separate articles. Seven of the nine articles narrowed their scope to tactical, historical, or individual perspective themes. One article recounted the Battle of Ia Drang Valley. Another surveyed the lessons learned for air cavalry. Others reflected on officership from 1966-1971, told the combat nurses' story, and related experiences with the South Vietnamese Army in 1965.

Two authors in this Vietnam edition highly criticized both the Army and Summers' thesis from On Strategy. First, Chaplain (Colonel) Cecil B. Currey excoriated the Army for preparing for the past by closing its eyes to the lessons of Vietnam. Currey's criticism of

Summers derived from On Strategy's placing the blame for failure in Vietnam outside the institution.<sup>10</sup> Second, Summers' casual dismissal of counterinsurgency greatly disturbed Currey. Further, Currey challenged Summers' idea that direct assaults against North Vietnam would have produced victory. Currey claimed that the Army today seems to have adopted Summers' view as the perfect explanation for what went wrong in Vietnam.<sup>11</sup>

Equally critical of Summers is LTC (retired) James R. Ward's essay entitled, "Vietnam: Insurgency or War?"<sup>12</sup> Here, for the first time in the Military Review forum, fundamental questions relating to the nature of the war, enemy strategies, and appropriate counter-strategies received critical attention. Ward concluded that the struggle was both an insurgency and a conventional conflict and U.S. leaders failed to recognize the essential duality of the struggle. In turn, this precipitated a misdirected military effort born of an inability to discern enemy strategy and the attendant need to develop an effective counter-strategy.<sup>13</sup>

Although the January 1989 edition fell short of Professor Weigley's standards, critical assessments have eventually appeared. However, his point is well taken. It took sixteen years for an assessment to arrive that questioned conventional ideas. Finally, the military

journals have failed to address the "no-win" argument for consideration by military readers. Nor have the journals provided a full exposition on North Vietnamese and Viet Cong strategies on the order of Douglas Pike's Viet Cong or PAVN.

### DOCTRINE

Doctrine drives the Army's force structure, equipment, material acquisition, conduct of combat operations, and service school curricula. It represents the "authoritative fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions."<sup>14</sup> In a real sense, doctrine is the common thread that runs through everything the Army thinks, says, and does. Accordingly, a close examination of doctrine will offer insights into how the Army has digested Vietnam's strategic legacy.

Before embarking upon this examination, an explanatory note on the Army's doctrinal regime is in order. The Army publishes close to one hundred doctrinal manuals. I will obviously have no time to examine all of them. Nor is such a broad investigation necessary. A few key doctrinal manuals will give us a clear idea of how Vietnam has affected the Army. These doctrinal manuals may be loosely called "source" manuals. All other doctrinal manuals take

the general concepts and principles they set forth and expand upon them.

The source manuals that shape the Army's doctrinal system are Field Manual (FM) 100-1 The Army, FM 100-5 Operations, and FM 100-20 Low-Intensity Conflict. However, before examining each manual, an overall, brief review of U.S. tactical doctrine from 1946-1976 will help to establish a historical context.

The first published Leavenworth Paper traced the evolution of U.S. Army tactical doctrine from 1946 to 1976.<sup>15</sup> Its author, Major Robert A. Doughty, studied a number of factors that influenced the character of U.S. Army doctrine in the postwar period. These factors were national security policy, service and branch parochialism, and actual battlefield experience. Doughty's study concluded that "even though all of America's military conflicts since World War II have been outside Europe, the Army and the nation have invariably refocused their concerns after these conflicts upon the defense of Western Europe."<sup>16</sup> Doctrine, therefore, for the postwar Army, has centered on a European-type battlefield.<sup>17</sup>

However, this gravitation to the central European battlefield should not obscure the considerable changes in doctrine that transpired during the years embraced by Doughty's study. Three periods mark distinct postwar

doctrinal transformations. First, the Army radically changed its doctrine and organization to adapt to the nuclear battlefield in the 1950s.<sup>18</sup> Second, the Army constructed several doctrines concentrating on counterinsurgency or on a conventional or nuclear battlefield in a European-type environment (1960s).<sup>19</sup> Finally, in the early 1970s, the Army moved away from counterinsurgency. It again concentrated on a conventional-nuclear battlefield in Europe.<sup>20</sup>

Doughty concluded that an emphasis on firepower, the defense, and attrition have progressively increased, becoming the primary characteristics of U.S. Army tactical doctrine.<sup>21</sup> These trends have withstood the influences driving postwar Army doctrinal change, or the character and timing of the changes themselves.

This brief summary gives us a bit of background for Army doctrine and brings us to 1976. 1976 will be a landmark year for Army doctrine since FM 100-5 Operations appeared as the first post-Vietnam doctrinal statement published by the Army. However, before turning to FM 100-5, we need to look at FM 100-1 The Army.

Field Manual (FM) 100-1 The Army

Succinctly stated, FM 100-1 sets forth the Army's *raison d'être*. First, it lays out the constitutional and legal foundations which establish the Army. Second, FM 100-1 outlines the Army's fundamental role in assisting the nation to achieve its national security objectives. This doctrinal centerpiece describes itself as the Army's capstone manual to distinguish itself from FM 100-5 Operations. The latter sets forth the basic doctrine that guides the U.S. Army in combat.

Conceptually, FM 100-1 envisions a broad "spectrum of conflict." Within this is a smaller spectrum of conflict involving military actions. The Army divides this military conflict spectrum into three categories: general war, limited war, and low-intensity conflict.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike the Air Force's equivalent to FM 100-1, Vietnam does appear in the Army's doctrinal centerpiece when discussing "The Army and Limited War." It employs Vietnam in the context of providing an example to support the manual's definition of a limited war. Limited war "involves sustained combat between regular forces at levels short of general war." The conflicts in Korea and Vietnam are examples of limited war.<sup>23</sup> Apparently, the word "Vietnam" appears in neither the 1979 nor the vastly improved 1984

versions of Air Force Manual 1-1, Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force.<sup>24</sup>

It is interesting that the source doctrinal manual which divides the spectrum of war into general, limited, and low-intensity conflict would put Vietnam in the limited war category. FM 100-1 defines limited war as "conflict between *regular forces* at levels short of general war" (italics added). By contrast, the manual classifies low-intensity conflict as "action below the level of sustained combat between regular forces. Operations may involve *some formations of regular forces* as well as sophisticated weapons and could, if not contained or terminated, escalate into more intense operations."<sup>25</sup>

Vietnam, employed to explain "limited war," betrays an official view that places Vietnam squarely within the traditional, conventional conflict mold. The FM 100-1 definition of limited war cites both Korea and Vietnam as examples. It therefore lumps together two struggles which much scholarship has attempted to differentiate. FM 100-1 defines limited war's objectives as the neutralization or destruction of the enemy's armed forces, and the restoration of the political and territorial integrity of the friendly nation. This formulation comes closer to Summers' conventional war thesis than Davidson's, Krepinevich's or



Pike's characterizations of the Vietnam War as revolutionary in nature.

This assessment does not say that Vietnam should have been an example in the low-intensity conflict category. However, the Army's three categories has placed Vietnam in the middle. By so doing, it has seemed to focus on its main unit combat efforts of 1965-1973. The support for the more low-intensity conflict efforts it made from 1950 to 1964, or its support for the Civil Operations Revolutionary Development Program (CORDS) which began in 1967, don't easily accommodate themselves under the "limited war" rubric.

Absent from FM 100-1 is any explicit conceptual recognition that conflicts may develop *within* nations as opposed to *among* nations. The manual's "National Purpose and Power" section the manual states "Military forces are needed to promote and protect U.S. interests because conflict frequently occurs *among* nations (emphasis added). Conflicts among nations vary from minor disagreements to fundamental clashes over ideologies and national objectives."<sup>26</sup> Although the terms "terrorism and insurgency" are supplied to describe LIC, it is not made clear that these phenomena can arise from *within* a state. These instrumentalities (terrorism, insurgency) may be employed by entities within the state to achieve political power and establish a

political order that is hostile to U.S. interests. However, with the strong accentuation in the previous section on conflict among nations, this distinction never becomes clear.

This distinction of *among* nations versus *within* nations should be regarded as more than an abstract exercise in semantics. The theory, phenomena, and application of revolutionary war contains prescriptions for how to achieve political power *within* a state. Mao, Giap, and Regis Debray have all published these prescriptions in the past fifty years. Chapter Two demonstrated that no small degree of scholarship has argued that the Vietnam War was a *revolutionary war* (see Krepinevich and Davidson in Chapter Two). The argument also asserts that a failure to recognize it as such, barred a successful U.S. response.

Another interesting observation relates to FM 100-1 and the Army's doctrinal hierarchy. FM 100-1 is the progenitor of other manuals in its doctrinal system. Let's diverge a bit from the three categories of conflict the Army employs in FM 100-1 (general war, limited war, low-intensity conflict). Further, let's break the spectrum into two halves--the prosecution of mid to high-intensity conflict and the conduct of those actions short of war. By so doing, we find that the fountainhead of the Army doctrinal system addresses the first with specific doctrinal reference, but

not the second. In its preface, FM 100-1 cites FM 100-5 as the basic doctrine that guides U.S. Army in combat. The sections that deal with operational art and tactics do the same. But FM 100-1 does not include a doctrinal cross-reference to FM 100-20 Low-Intensity Conflict in the manual's preface which also covers the conduct of those "actions short of war." In fact, no cross-reference to FM 100-20 appears in FM 100-1.

FM 100-5 and FM 100-20 complement each other to cover the entire spectrum of conflict. However, the balance certainly favors the mid to high-intensity side of the spectrum of conflict covered by FM 100-5. A plausible explanation for this is rooted in the historical development of Army "warfighting" doctrine. Post-Vietnam era doctrinal development will now be discussed in the next section that covers FM 100-5 Operations. Before embarking upon this examination of FM 100-5, I must pause to briefly sketch the ongoing update of FM 100-1.

In November 1989, the U.S. Army War College, as proponent for FM 100-1, sent a revision of FM 100-1 throughout the Army in the form of a coordinating draft. No preface was included in this draft, so I cannot ascertain at this point if reference will be made to FM 100-20 as well as FM 100-5. However, a significant proposed change drops the division of the spectrum of conflict into general war,

limited war, and low-intensity conflict in favor of an operational continuum concept.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to the 1986 version, the 1989 draft edition conceives of an "operational continuum" with the three states of confrontation as peacetime competition, conflict, and war.<sup>28</sup> Vietnam is not employed as an example to explain any of the three states. The draft manual asserts that low-intensity conflict may take place throughout the entire continuum.<sup>29</sup>

Although the draft intends to drop Vietnam as an example, it is no less significant that fifteen years after the war ended, Vietnam would still be cited as an example of limited war in which regular forces figured prominently. The new manual seems to adopt a more fluid concept of conflict which sees military activities breaking down the traditional low, mid, and high-intensity categories previously adopted. However, the proposed manual still focuses on warfighting by omitting Army planning responsibilities for those actions other than warfighting (i.e. actions short of war).<sup>30</sup> Also, there is no explicit recognition of conflicts arising within states as a distinct possibility requiring the Army to prepare for in response to National Command Authority needs.

### FM 100-5 Operations

The 1976 edition of FM 100-5 Operations replaced the 1968 version of the same manual. Therefore, it emerged as the first doctrinal statement after Vietnam. This manual attempted to present an over-arching concept of warfare that would rationalize everything the Army did, from training recruits to designing tanks.<sup>31</sup> A U.S. Army Leavenworth Paper which recounted the origins of the post-Vietnam doctrine, concluded that FM 100-5's authors intended that it play a major role "in expunging the bitter Vietnam War experience."<sup>32</sup> This edition of FM 100-5 parted company from its predecessors in four respects. First, it made doctrine assume the role of the primary integrating medium within the Army; second, it deliberately drew the Army's attention away from Vietnam and the volunteer Army to address Soviet and Warsaw Pact modernization in Europe and the lethality of new weapons; third, it aimed at making doctrine universally understood and pragmatic; and finally, the manual became the project of the Commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and his personal vehicle to effect change within the Army.<sup>33</sup>

The conception, writing, and promulgation of FM 100-5 was closely associated with General William E. DePuy, the TRADOC Commander. General DePuy served for three years in Vietnam. During his first two years (1964-1966) he served

as the operations officer for General Westmoreland in the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam. During his last tour (1968-1969), DePuy commanded the 1st Infantry Division. Although he played an important role in the Vietnam War, he perceived the war as an aberration in the historical trend of warfare.<sup>34</sup> DePuy and his assistants felt that the Army had lost a generation's worth of technical modernization there while gaining a generation's worth of nearly irrelevant combat experience.<sup>35</sup> DePuy was skeptical of the relevance of the Korean and Vietnam experiences, except as they reinforced his ideas about armored, combined arms warfare.<sup>36</sup>

The October 1973 Arab-Israeli War presented a type of modern warfare which, in DePuy's mind, Vietnam had ill-prepared the Army to fight. The tank became the centerpiece for European or Middle East scenarios for future Army battles. Accordingly, DePuy designated the U.S. Army Armor School as the primary proponent for revising the Army's doctrine. Herbert, in his Leavenworth Paper, surmised that this came about due to the take-charge, get-it-done personality of then Major General Don Starry (Armor School Commandant, and later, TRADOC Commander). Also, the reality that a decade's worth of intense experience of preparing officers and soldiers for Vietnam made the U.S. Army

Infantry School at Fort Benning too lethargic to lead DePuy's plans for doctrinal renewal.<sup>37</sup>

As a consequence, the 1976 version of FM 100-5 emerged with a pronounced emphasis on armored warfare, Soviet weapons systems, the Fulda Gap, and the "active defense." This collectively reflected the Army role in a NATO defense on the central plains of Europe. For the first time, the term "AirLand Battle" appears in the 1976 edition. It described the joint Army-Air Force prosecution of war in the European theater of operations. In sum, the 1976 FM 100-5 deliberately attempted to change the way the U.S. Army thought about and prepared for war.<sup>38</sup>

The 1976 FM 100-5 quickly became controversial within the Army. It underwent two revisions--the first in 1982, the second in 1986. The institutional dissatisfaction with the 1976 version largely stemmed from the heavy-handed way in which it was thrust on the Army.<sup>39</sup> Major criticism of the manual centered on three recurring themes: first, defense was emphasized to the expense of the offense; second, the preoccupation with force ratios excluded the psychological dimensions of warfare; and finally, by focusing on Europe contingencies elsewhere in the world were ignored.<sup>40</sup>

Subsequent versions of FM 100-5 did much to correct the first two deficiencies of the 1976 edition. They

restored the offense and maneuver. With the recognition of leadership as a combat power dynamic and the insertion of combat service support considerations and sustainment "imperatives," the 1986 edition of FM 100-5 and its core concept of AirLand Battle gained wide acceptance. They continue to enjoy credibility within the Army. Revisions of FM 100-5 also included concepts for the operational art and operational warfighting design, conspicuously absent from the 1976 edition. However, Army doctrine is being continually challenged from within the institution and there are some indications that the current edition of FM 100-5 enjoys less than overwhelming endorsement as an adequate doctrine to meet the Army's needs.

As in the previous editions of FM 100-5 Operations, the 1986 version focused exclusively on mid to high-intensity warfare. The 1986 edition contains a section describing low-intensity conflict in the opening chapter of the manual. Two pages later, the manual admits to its focus on mid to high-intensity warfare yet asserts that the four fundamental doctrinal tenets of AirLand Battle apply equally to the military operations characteristic of low-intensity conflict war.<sup>41</sup> Noting that military operations in low-intensity war differ significantly from those of high and mid-intensity conflict, the manual directs the reader to FM 100-20 Low-Intensity Conflict which addresses this subject



in detail.<sup>42</sup> However, in its opening sentence to the low intensity conflict section, FM 100-5 conceptually places low intensity conflict in the warfighting spectrum. It does so by saying "the growing incidence of war at the low end of the conflict spectrum demands Army action on the unique battlefields of low intensity conflict. This form of warfare...." (emphasis added).<sup>43</sup>

FM 100-5 has served the role of the doctrinal lightning rod and focus of U.S. Army attention from the close of the Vietnam War to present. One of the avowed purposes of the doctrinal re-orientation of the Army was to shift the Army's attention away from Vietnam and onto what the war was perceived to have cost the Army in terms of morale, prestige, and modernization. In the words of a former USACGSC department director, "The Army had its tail between its legs in 1975. The morale was terrible. DePuy gave it a mission and gave it back its self-respect."<sup>44</sup>

That General DePuy's legacy to the Army was a sense of mission and renewed self-confidence is a widely shared belief in Army circles, and richly deserved. However, for the generation of officers who entered into active duty during and after General DePuy's tenure at TRADOC, the fixation with central Europe's mid to high-intensity warfare scenario would eventually create a generational gap in the wealth of experience the Army had paid so dearly for in

Vietnam. This fact, however, has remained relatively obscure.

#### FM 100-20 Low-Intensity Conflict

U.S. low-intensity conflict experience and doctrine pre-dated Vietnam. In a recently published article in Military Review, Captain Oren D. Sprague cites the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) as the Army's first experience with LIC in which it "planned to fight its battles in the traditional European manner... [the Indian's] basic tactic was the surprise ambush.... The result of these unmatched strategies would be an Army ever seeking an elusive enemy that, in spite of tremendous effort and cost, it would be unable to draw into a decisive engagement."<sup>45</sup> The Indian wars during the last quarter of the nineteenth century also drew the Army's attention away from European battlefields.

The next historical experience with low-intensity conflict occurred during the American efforts to pacify the Philippines between 1898 and 1902. At the turn of the century, 125,000 American soldiers countered some 60,000 Filipino insurgents.<sup>46</sup> The American pacification experience of ninety years ago included combined politico-economic, military, psychological offensives by insurgent and counterinsurgent forces. It also witnessed the falling out of allies, power conflicts among the insurgents, problems of

inter-service and civil-military coordination within the counterinsurgent effort. Problems with the press, the key role of intelligence, popular support of the insurgents, and movement of the population to protected villages were all present well before Vietnam.<sup>47</sup>

From the late nineteenth century to 1934, the Marine Corps and Army participated in a recurring series of military interventions or "Small Wars." These military actions occurred in Cuba (1906-1909), Haiti and the Dominican Republic (1915-1916), and Nicaragua (1927-1933). Although these interventions do not completely fit within low-intensity conflict, a 1940 Marine Corps manual called them "Small Wars," an umbrella term then used to cover the range of military actions short of "regular warfare against a first-rate power."<sup>48</sup> During this period, the United States Army ranked seventeenth in the world, making the U.S. eligible for classification as "second-rate" power status by the then current standards.<sup>49</sup>

The experiences of World War II, the dawn of the nuclear age, and the emergence of the Cold War collectively relegated the U.S.'s experience with "Small War" to the realm of historical curiosity.<sup>50</sup> The Korean War called forth the need for theories and doctrines about limited, conventional war. Collectively, they marked a major

conceptual departure from America's unconventional wars fought in Florida, the Philippines, and Latin America.<sup>51</sup>

When the Kennedy Administration took office in 1961, the new President's inaugural address responded to Khrushchev's "Wars of National Liberation" with ringing rhetoric. The administration's emphasis on developing a counterinsurgency capability to counter Khrushchev's challenge met initial resistance in the Army. General George H. Decker, Army Chief of Staff (1960-1962) countered a presidential lecture to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) with the reply "Any good soldier can handle guerrillas."<sup>52</sup> His successor as Chief of Staff (1962-1964), General Earle Wheeler, sang a similar tune when he stated that "the essence of the problem in Vietnam is military."<sup>53</sup> As Andrew Krepinevich notes in his book, The Army and Vietnam, "The Kennedy Administration's call for a re-evaluation of its doctrine and force structure was a negative one. In the Army's thinking, there was scant difference between limited war and insurgency."<sup>54</sup> The 1986 version of FM 100-1 The Army shows a persistence of this attitude with its citation of Vietnam as an example of *limited war*.

Despite the Army's initial lethargy during the early years of Vietnam, counterinsurgency eventually received doctrinal attention in the 1967 and 1972 versions of Field Manual (FM) 31-23 Stability Operations, U.S. Army Doctrine.

FM 31-23 proved to be the direct ancestor of FM 100-20 Low-Intensity Conflict. The first FM 100-20 which was entitled Internal Defense and Development, U.S. Army Doctrine.<sup>55</sup> FM 100-20's title changed from Internal Defense and Development to Low-Intensity Conflict in 1981 with the updating and re-publication of the manual. The title of Low-Intensity Conflict was retained for the approved final draft version of 7 March 1989. Table 3-3 provides an overview of the evolution of the Army's Low-Intensity Conflict doctrine.

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TURN TO PAGE 134 FOR TABLE 3-3)

TABLE 3-3  
U.S. ARMY LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT DOCTRINAL EVOLUTION (1967-1989)

	FM 31-23, Stability Operations, US Army Doctrine (1967)	FM 31-23, Stability Operations, US Army Doctrine (1972)	FM 100-20, Internal Defense and Development, US Army Doctrine (1974)	FM 100-20, Low Intensity Conflict (1981)	FM 100-20, Low Intensity Conflict (AFD) 1989 AFM 2-20
Objectives of US Army efforts	Strengthen US and collective security; promote world peace	Create a stable international environment; help others maintain independence; promote common defense and world peace	Promote a cooperative world; protect strategic areas, resources and markets; help satisfy social and economic aspirations	Assist friendly gov't to protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency	Joint Doctrine. Military force is indirect to achievement of the strategic aim. USA/USAF play supporting vice prosecution roles
Concept of "The Problem"	Influence of revolutionary Communist doctrine; manipulation of less-developed countries by external powers	Instability derived from infusion of revolutionary Communist doctrine	Dislocations/disastrous process	Social, economic, political factors of developing nations give rise to internal conflict	LIC threat derives from change, discontent, violence, instability, lack of gov't legitimacy. Threat posed by exploitation of instability by groups opposed to U.S. interests
US Army Roles	Logistical, training and operational assistance; large combat forces if needed	Logistical, training, and advisory assistance; phased entry of "tiers" of combat force if needed; host country has primary manpower responsibility	Logistical and training advice; participation in material sales and servicing; careful, phased entry of combat forces if needed; host country resources used to the maximum feasible extent	Security assistance, Army support to MAAGs. 3 "tiers" of forces - sec assist forces (NTT) - overseas general purpose MTOE units, BDE sized back-up - SAF - security assistance forces - special forces augmented by civil affairs, PSYOPS, engineers.	Employment of US combat troops in insurgency and counterinsurgency. Tasks allocated to active and reserve components; military to military exchanges, security assistance

#### HISTORICAL NOTES:

- 1) Columns 1-3 taken from MAJ John M. Oseth's, "Where the Army Has Stood: Tracks in the Doctrinal Forest," Military Review 67 (February 1981): 61-71. Columns 4-5 are added as a part of the thesis's investigation into the evolution of low-intensity conflict doctrine.
- 2) In 1986, Congress, by legislative fiat established another assistant secretary of defense post entitled, "The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict." It also created a functionally oriented unified command whose Commander-In-Chief (CINIC) plays the role of a supporting CINIC in the Unified Command Plan. This new Unified Command was called United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

The 1967 FM 31-23 precursor to FM 100-20 heavily favored the employment of U.S. combat troops in comparison with the manuals that would eventually supersede it. The 1967 doctrine envisioned the employment of combat units as large as field armies.<sup>56</sup> The philosophy expressed in this 1967 manual stated, "In view of the time to train and equip host country forces, it may be necessary to introduce selected U.S. Army units to assist host country forces in combat support and combat service support missions."<sup>57</sup> This predilection for injecting U.S. troops reflected the height of U.S. involvement in Vietnam as the prevailing reality.<sup>58</sup>

With the advent of the 1974 reformulation of FM 31-23 doctrine into FM 100-20 Internal Defense and Development, the term "stability operations" forever disappeared from the Army's doctrinal lexicon. The Army's sensitivity to its involvement with developing nations that might perceive the term "stability operations" as a predisposition to uphold a status quo within a particular country most likely generated this change.<sup>59</sup> However, over-riding this sensitivity was President Nixon's Guam Doctrine (1969) that not only ushered in Vietnamization, but also announced to the world that the U.S. was no longer going to spend the lifeblood of its youth overseas in situations where U.S. interests were marginally involved. Accordingly, Army doctrine adjusted. The 1974 edition of FM 100-20 made it extremely clear that

significant U.S. involvement, defined in terms of a substantial commitment of U.S. ground forces, was classified as an extraordinary event. Such a commitment, if it occurred at all, would be preceded by substantial forms of traditional military assistance and advisors. Although the 1974 version of the IDAD manual recognized that the introduction of U.S. fighting forces might be necessary, the U.S. military role in these situations must be principally advisory.<sup>60</sup>

The 1974 version clearly backed away from a precipitous injection of U.S. troops. First, if the in-country advisory and assistance effort required augmentation, specialized training capabilities got added; then if this proved insufficient, a brigade-sized back-up force would be introduced; finally, other brigade-sized conventional forces could also be introduced.<sup>61</sup>

The 1981 evolution of low-intensity conflict doctrine as FM 100-20 Low-Intensity Conflict moved the Army and military roles to the back of the manual. Expanded coverage of the missions, roles, and functions of other U.S. government agencies, to include insertion of the unified command and Joint Chiefs of Staff role, jumped to the forward parts of the manual. The key concepts of Internal Defense and Development and Foreign Internal Defense formed the manual's core. The reticence to go to direct



intervention by U.S. combat troops carried over from the 1974 version. When the manual does discuss military roles, it asserted that the "organization of counter-guerrilla forces is designed around light infantry fighting elements." It then proceeds to discuss roles for armored and mechanized infantry units.<sup>62</sup> In fact, the manual found a niche for just about every functional unit from the conventional force structure to include airborne, airmobile, and armored cavalry.<sup>63</sup> The 1981 version borrowed tactical concepts and terminology from the Army's conventional side of the doctrinal house such as deliberate attack, exploitation, pursuit, raid, and strike operations. These operations, employed under the offensive rubric, defeated guerrilla forces.<sup>64</sup>

The injection of these traditional tactical concepts forced Andrew Krepinevich to lament that the manual had in effect perpetuated the Vietnam-era commander's dilemma: "What has priority, the traditional mission of closing with and destroying the enemy, or population safety and security?"<sup>65</sup>

The most recent evolution of FM 100-20, dated 1989, expunged the narrow focus on U.S. combat forces' roles which centered on counter-guerrilla operations. Instead, the latest version adopted an overarching concept of low-intensity conflict which embraces insurgency and

counterinsurgency, terrorism, peacekeeping operations, and peacetime contingency operations. The internal defense and development and the foreign internal defense concepts that previously formed the centerpiece of the doctrine are now cast within the overall conceptual rubric of low-intensity conflict, specifically under the insurgency and counterinsurgency aspects of host government and U.S. government strategies to counteract insurgency.

At the very outset, the manual acknowledges that the term low-intensity conflict (LIC) is a misnomer. This most likely reflects definitional war that had been waged in the pages of the Military Review beginning in 1985 and reaching its zenith in 1986 and 1987. Much of this controversy centered on the American ethnocentricity manifest in terming something "low-intensity" (from the U.S. point of view). From the viewpoint of the threatened state, the conflict is high-intensity. It usually entails the very survival of a state or the political order within a state. The popular riposte that "there are no low-intensity bullets" captures the essence of the dissatisfaction with the current terminology.

With a lineage that can be traced back to its 1974 predecessor, the manual very early on points out that indirect, rather than direct, applications of U.S. military power are the most appropriate for achieving and attaining

national goals.<sup>66</sup> The subordination of the military to a support role to the other elements of national power (political, economic, informational) again appears early-on in the manual.

One allied exchange instructor at the Command and General Staff College, in a briefing prepared for his embassy, wondered if this speaks of a genuine reluctance, or better yet, a decided intention not to use U.S. troops in an insurgency situation for which FM 100-20 was designed.<sup>67</sup> To support his point, he cites the manual:

When required, U.S. forces may engage and defeat the enemy or provide the opportunity for friendly forces to develop the capability to do the job themselves. However, this commitment of U.S. forces to combat is an unusual event, particularly in a counterinsurgency. The principal function of the U.S. forces must be to assist the host nation, but it is the host nation which must ultimately defeat the insurgency and eliminate the internal conditions that bred it.<sup>68</sup>

The manual has several principal strengths. First, it is joint doctrine between the Army and Air Force. Second, although relegated to an appendix, the manual sets forth an analytical model to conduct assessments for insurgency or counterinsurgency. The analysis centers on three key factors: the nature of the society, the nature of the insurgency, and the nature of the government. Officers who attend the Command and General Staff Course in-residence

at Fort Leavenworth both learn and apply this analytical model. Unfortunately, due to the time constraints placed on the Insurgency and Counterinsurgency Course, students employ the tool piecemeal to several historical examples of insurgencies. Third, like FM 100-5, the manual sets LIC at the strategic and operational levels. It takes great care to link strategic objectives to operational planning. To elaborate on this, the manual goes into some degree of detail with diagrams complete with supporting statements which describe the U.S. Government's foreign policy making organs (State, Defense) to include a schematic of how the foreign assistance system functions.

Even with these strengths, the manual does have its drawbacks. As previously mentioned, FM 100-5 has intruded upon FM 100-20 by announcing that the tenets of AirLand Battle (Agility, Initiative, Depth, and Synchronization) apply to Low-Intensity Conflict. FM 100-20 comes along, and after enigmatically stating that these FM 100-5 tenets "apply, at the appropriate level, in LIC," one is left with the impression of a forced adoption of the tenets that apply to successful conventional military operations at the mid- to high-intensity end of the spectrum. FM 100-20 then proceeds to expound on the imperatives of LIC (political dominance, legitimacy, unity of effort, adaptability, and patience), yet leaves this imperative divorced from the

AirLand battle tenets that have a corresponding set of their own tenets in FM 100-5. There appears to be much of an intellectual gulf here that leaves the student of FM 100-20 with a disjointed impression of what precepts he is to follow.

This has not gone unnoticed within the Army. A member of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College faculty recently addressed this very issue in the Military Review. Rejecting the notion that the Army needs two separate operational doctrines for mid-intensity and low-intensity conflicts, he nevertheless argued that AirLand Battle doctrine supplies insufficient guidance for the military dimension of counterinsurgency.<sup>69</sup>

Also, the packaging of multiple disparate activities under the single level of LIC begs confusion. Peacekeeping operations, insurgency, terrorism, peacetime contingency operations, and security assistance as the broad categories in which U.S. military activity may take place, deny the FM 100-20 the coherence enjoyed by its sister manual, FM 100-5. However, this may have more to do with the difficulty in putting down the "best available thought" than structural or thematic fissures caused by its authors. Also, the ability to focus on a homogeneous threat and geographical area does much to guarantee FM 100-5 its coherence.

In summary, FM 100-20's evolution has reflected the Army's departure from Vietnam, and the Guam Doctrine, as well as the institution's own adjustments in attitudes to the military's proper role in these "other than war" activities, away from the central European plain.

### **SERVICE SCHOOL CURRICULA**

Another way to assess how the military as an institution has come to terms with Vietnam will be to look at what the middle and senior service schools have placed on their instructional menus. Some degree of understanding can also be gleaned from how many hours are devoted to low-intensity conflict as a separate sphere of military activity. Also, the methodologies employed to teach Vietnam indicate how the Army sees the legacy of "America's Longest War."

What facts and figures are available will be presented here in the hopes of establishing some record of institutional attention on Vietnam and its legacy. This section will mix a bit of apples and oranges in that it will address both curricula attention devoted directly to Vietnam (i.e. the focus on the war itself as history or an individual case study), or indirectly (as in the measurement of curricula hours devoted to low-intensity conflict).

## **U.S. ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE**

First, in terms of Vietnam proper, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (USACGSC) presents three lessons (six hours) in the core curriculum in its course entitled, "The Evolution of Modern Warfare (P671)." The Combat Studies Institute presents the overall course of instruction for military history at USACGSC. During the 1989-1990 Academic Year, seventy-two hours of classroom historical work appeared on each student's schedule, which was spread out over the course of ten months--two hours per week--in thirty-eight lessons. Lessons thirty-three through thirty-five focus on Vietnam and occur between mid-April and the first week of May during the year of in-residence study. The Combat Studies Institute (CSI) requires fourteen separate readings (181 pages), which offer a relatively comprehensive treatment. The three lesson treatment of Vietnam is multifaceted, exposing the student to enemy strategy, single battles, insurgency, Vietnam "lessons" literature, the theory of limited war, and the postwar debate. Instruction is conducted in a "staff group" made up of fifteen to sixteen students (senior captains, majors), led by a CSI instructor. CSI formulates discussion questions to guide each week's two hour discussion of the required readings.

In a recently published article in Military Review, a former Command and General Staff College Morrison Professor of History (1986-1987), Dr. Peter Maslowski, penned some disquieting observations about mid-level Army officers and their reaction to the Combat Studies Institute's Vietnam instruction. Observing that most students' examination of the armed forces' mistakes in World War I, World War II, and Korea were worthy of the country's best graduate school history seminars, he lamented that when the course reached Vietnam, the students believed they already knew what caused defeat: yellow-streaked politicians, irresponsible journalism, and the collapse of home front morale.<sup>70</sup> Maslowski severely criticizes CGSC students for having read Bruce Palmer's The 25 Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam, and having failed to understand its exposition of "the large number of mistakes made by the Armed Forces that had little to do with political constraints, critical press clippings, or citizens exercising First Amendment rights."<sup>71</sup>

Maslowski concluded that the students made three unwarranted assumptions when discussing Vietnam in their staff groups:

First, they assumed that if only the restraints had been taken off, the United States would have won.... Second, that winning was worth the price.... Finally, the failure to prevail in Vietnam, students declared, was further proof that a democracy cannot fight a long war.<sup>72</sup>



As will be shown in the next section of this methodology, a survey of the CGSC 1989-1990 class shows a more sophisticated attitude about the Vietnam War that does not overwhelmingly hold that politicians, the press, nor Congress caused American failure in Vietnam. The attitudes attributed to CGSC students by Maslowski exist, but do not reflect the majority view. More of this will be discussed in the next section and in Chapter Four.

The amount of time devoted to the history, theory, and doctrine of low-intensity conflict in service school curricula constitutes another measure of Vietnam's legacy. At CGSC, this does not exclusively focus on Vietnam as a case study for low-intensity conflict, nor should it. Students study many insurgencies, such as the French experience in the 1950s with Algeria and Indochina. It also includes the Omani and the Philippine insurgencies in order to gain a historical perspective on low-intensity conflict in its theoretical and doctrinal dimensions.

The Command and General Staff College's Department of Joint and Combined Operations teaches a core curriculum course entitled "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" which entails thirty-nine hours of classroom time. The thirty-nine hours represents a high water mark in instructional hours since the 1980s. As we'll see from the following table, instructional hours in low-intensity conflict (LIC)

related subjects bottomed out during the 1981-1982 academic year and gradually built up over the remainder of the decade.

TABLE 3-4

CGSC LIC RELATED INSTRUCTION 1979-1990 <sup>73</sup>

ACADEMIC YEAR	LIC HOURS IN CORE CURRICULUM	TOTAL HOURS IN CORE	GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS	TOPIC FOCUS
1979-80	49	454	SEA, LATAM, CCS	CI, SA
1980-81	46	583	LATAM, CCS, VN	CI, SA, T
1981-82	8	482	CCS-Venezuela	CI, T
1982-83	13	694	CCS-Venezuela	CI, SA
1983-84	23	594	LATAM, CCS-Ven	CI, SA
1984-85	30	684	LRA, CCS-Ven	CI, T
1985-86	32	676	LATAM, CCS	CI, TCA, PKO
1986-87	28	642	LRA to SS	CI, TCA, PKO
1987-88	24	613	UC AORs	
1988-89	32	-	(NOTE 1)	
1989-90	39	672	(NOTE 2)	

LEGEND:

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS ABBREVIATIONS

SEA = South East Asia; VN = Vietnam

LATAM = Latin America; LRA = LATAM Regional Assessment

CCS = Country Case Study;

SS = Strategic Studies Curriculum

CCS-Ven = Country Case Study - Venezuela

TOPIC FOCUS ABBREVIATIONS

CI = Counterinsurgency

SA = Security Assistance

T = Terrorism

TCA = Terrorism Counteraction

PKO = Peacekeeping Operations

Note 1. LIC course renamed "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency." Terrorism, PKO, and peacetime contingency operations were moved to Theater Operations and Strategy blocks of instruction as integrated curriculum. LIC instruction, per se, loses its visibility/identity as pure LIC instruction.

NOTE 2. Core Curriculum course "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" requires students to work through portions of the Algerian, Malayan, Vietnamese, and Philippine insurgencies by applying the CGSC Insurgency Analysis Worksheet. Course designed to analyze revolutionary warfare.

The current thirty-nine hours allotted to "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" pales in comparison to the number of hours devoted to "Combat Operations"--or, as commonly referred to by CGSC students--"tactics." The study of FM 100-5, its derivative manuals, and the supporting

practical exercises and lab hours, exceeds the study of revolutionary war by nearly a factor of nine to one.<sup>74</sup> Some would object to the inclusion of the course "Applied Tactical Operations (A396)," a CGSC "elective," in this count. However, all combat arms and combat support arms officers (over 60 percent of students) are required by CGSC policy to take this ninety hour "elective" course outside the core curriculum. The course, although nominally an "elective" which the college schedules during the elective curriculum, has no voluntary qualities about it. The college requires students to enroll in it in order to graduate. In essence it equates to a core curriculum requirement.<sup>75</sup> It should also be remembered that combat service support officers, who comprise approximately 18 percent of the student body, are required to take a sixty hour "selective" on combat service support subjects supportive of FM 100-5 concepts during the "elective" curriculum.

#### **U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE**

Unlike the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, year by year data on Low-Intensity Conflict or counterinsurgency instruction is hard to come by. We do know from reading Summers' On Strategy that by 1965

counterinsurgency instruction had grown into a significant part of the U.S. Army War College's curriculum, but by 1974 it had been "subsumed into the common overview."<sup>76</sup> Summers confirms what has already been pointed out in the doctrinal section of the methodology when he writes:

Tactical doctrine underwent significant changes with the creation of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Counterinsurgency doctrines were swept away by a re-emphasis on conventional war modeled in large measure on the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict and a whole set of "How To Fight" manuals that were published.<sup>77</sup>

We do know that currently at the U.S. Army War College, a "Vietnam Case Study: A Strategic Assessment" is presented in the core curriculum during Course Two on "War, National Policy, and Strategy."<sup>78</sup> Course Two begins in early September and runs until late October. The time allotted to this strategic assessment of Vietnam is two one-half days of time scheduled on the academic calendar. All students read George C. Herring's "American Strategy in Vietnam: The Postwar Debate," published in Military Affairs (1982), and Jeffrey Clark's essay, "On Strategy and the Vietnam War," published in Parameters (Winter 1986). Both these readings also appear in the Command and General Staff College core course curriculum. The War College then breaks the students down into four groups and assigns readings to each group in accordance with the schools of thought

outlined earlier in Chapter Two (hawk-conventional, counterinsurgent, No-Win). The fourth group is assigned readings from William J. Duiker's The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam to round out the schools of thought by injecting U.S. and enemy strategies and points of view into the Vietnam assessment. This group is required to make a formal presentation on basic communist and U.S. strategies pursued. The assessment is conducted via the interaction among the four groups and discussion generated.

#### OTHER WAR COLLEGES

Other senior service colleges adopt a similar approach. The Air War College (AWC) at Maxwell Air Force Base has 846 contact hours of which 86.5 hours are spent in the Military Strategy Analysis Course.<sup>79</sup> Of these 86.5 hours, the AWC devotes roughly four hours on several counterinsurgency case studies, one of which is the French-Vietnamese War (1946-1954), and about eight hours on the American experience in Vietnam.<sup>80</sup>

In addition to this, the AWC requires the students to read two books on Vietnam: Andrew F. Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam (1986), and Mark Clodfelter's The Limits of Air Power: The American Bombing of North Vietnam (1989).<sup>81</sup> Taken together, the time spent by AWC students on Vietnam

would be approximately thirty hours inside and outside the classroom.<sup>82</sup> Individuals may write one of the required course papers for the Military Strategy Analysis Course on Vietnam. William P. Snyder, a professor of military strategy at the AWC, notes that Vietnam accounts for less than 5 percent of the written work accomplished by the students.<sup>83</sup>

#### **SURVEY OF CURRENT GENERATION OF CGSOC STUDENTS**

Since prevailing attitudes have a relationship to "legacies" it was necessary to round out the methodology with a survey of how the generation of officers without Vietnam experience view the war's operative lessons.

From William Westmoreland's and U.S. Grant Sharp's works, we know that the Vietnam military leadership felt very frustrated by the restrictions imposed upon them by the civilian leadership during the war. William E. DePuy pushed aside Vietnam as the Army sought to reestablish both its prestige and mission in the immediate postwar years. On Strategy captured both the imagination and endorsement of the immediate post-Vietnam military leadership. Gravitation to the belief that Vietnam was a conventional war where military means had been restricted by policy makers in Washington became prevalent in the Army.

However, it should be pointed out that some members of the senior military leadership, such as Bruce Palmer, did fault his own institution. Even though Palmer marked a divergence with Westmoreland and Sharp, Peter Maslowski noted his stopping short of pronouncing an unequivocal judgment on the military's mistakes. To quote Maslowski:

...Palmer cannot bring himself to pronounce the judgment that logically follows from his analysis... he asks "whether any significant improvements in U.S. performance would have made any difference in the outcome," and concludes that the answer is "probably 'no.'" The difficulties with this conclusion are threefold. First, he hedges by using the word "probably"; the answer just might as reasonably be "probably 'yes.'" Second, his statement assumes that ineffective military performance had no impact on the strategic, diplomatic and domestic political levels, which is illogical. Third, he undermines his conclusion by admitting that "American military professionals have much to learn from the tragic experience of Vietnam, because heeding those lessons could mean the difference between winning and losing a future conflict."<sup>84</sup>

Joseph Kraft, writing in the Washington Post in 1984, observed that "The generals and the admirals have learned and overlearned the lesson of Vietnam. They instinctively recoil from applying small doses of force in messy wars for obscure political purposes...."<sup>85</sup>

In his doctoral dissertation at Princeton University, Major David H. Petraeus produced some considerable scholarship which supports Kraft's idea. Petraeus found that when presidents considered the commitment of American

troops abroad since 1973, the military have generally been more cautious than the president's most aggressive principal civilian advisors.<sup>86</sup> To quote Petraeus, "today's generals and admirals want, above all else, to avoid not just another Vietnam, but the erosion of public support that would accompany military failure in virtually any endeavor."<sup>87</sup>

The manifestation of this prevailing attitude has found its expression in the Weinberger Doctrine which laid down six tests for the employment of military force. As events in Panama demonstrated, it took considerable recurrent stabs at American prestige to provoke an American military response. Even then, the American press and Congress accused the Bush Administration of timidity in failing to take advantage of an attempted coup by one of Noriega's own officers two months before the Panama invasion.

In general, the military leadership of the Vietnam-era have complained of restraints placed upon them by civilians. In the postwar period, the military leadership opted for self-imposed restraints on the use of military force. We will now look at how the middle-level of military officers look at Vietnam, the generation of officers without Vietnam experience.



Survey of the 1989-1990 Command and General Staff Officers'  
Course

Based on the schools of thought previously developed, I constructed a survey instrument to examine how the members of the current Command and General Staff Officer Course viewed the "lessons" of Vietnam. Besides asking about the overall view of the war held by the post-Vietnam officer generation, the survey was designed to address the more fundamental questions left open by the postwar debate. These questions centered on the very nature of the war itself (conventional versus revolutionary), and the efficacy of conventional military means to satisfy strategic goals. Officers' knowledge of specific events in the war relating back to these issues was also surveyed. Other fundamental questions involving Vietnam's relevancy checked on the validity of the overall survey. The survey also attempted to look beyond the prevailing attitudes in search of the sources of the current influence on the generation's attitudes about Vietnam.

## **BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE SURVEY**

### **Format**

The survey was a joint project sponsored by the author and the Command and General Staff College's Department of Joint and Combined Operations. The Department of Joint and Combined Operations had an interest in discovering the impact of their "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" (P552) instruction on student attitudes about Vietnam. Since the "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" instruction included an analysis of Vietnam, how the student attitudes changed or remained constant serves as useful feedback on the course's effectiveness.

The survey instrument (Appendix 1) consisted of thirty-one questions. The first nine demographic questions (A-I) pertained to the respondent's rank, educational level, parent service, military specialty, and Vietnam experience. The next six questions (J-O) listed twenty-four books which focused on the strategic military legacy of Vietnam. This series of questions included books which represented the conventional, counterinsurgency, and the no-win schools of thought. I randomly dispersed the books, representative of a particular school of thought, among all the questions. Finally, books on North Vietnamese strategy and organization were also included. After this series of "book reading

survey" questions, an open, fill-in-the-blank space was provided for books and articles to be listed that were not on the previous six questions.

Then, the next series of questions (P-S) asked the officer to list which author or book had influenced him most, where he had the opportunity to read the book, and to ascertain if sources other than books influenced his views. The next six survey questions (T-Y) then asked each respondent about his overall views on Vietnam. Each question's array of answers included representative responses from the schools of thought. The respondent was also asked for his assessment on the fundamental nature of the war, if the application of conventional military power to North Vietnam would have made a difference, and then asked questions about the efficacy of military power in relation to three Vietnam War events (Rolling Thunder, TET, Linebacker II). The survey concluded by asking questions about doctrinal adequacy and if the respondent had experienced a recent change in attitude about Vietnam and, --if "yes,"--what source caused the change in attitude?

#### Administration of The Survey

The resident Command and General Staff Officer's Course consists of 943 officers divided into four student divisions. It includes sister-service officers (USN, USAF, USMC) and international officers. The survey was

administered to two of the four student divisions in February 1990. Instructors from the Department of Joint and Combined Operations, completing instruction (2 February 1990) in one division, and then later beginning instruction (12 February) in a second division for "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" (P552), passed out the surveys to their staff groups. Student staff group leaders returned their surveys to instructors within a week's time. With approximately 250 students per division, the survey administered before the start of "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" was returned with 192 responses (77.8 percent); the survey administered after was returned with two hundred responses (80.0 percent). Based on an overall class size of 943 students, the percent of the 1989-1990 Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) surveyed equalled 41.5 percent. Finally, it should be pointed out that the survey was done anonymously.

#### The Survey Environment

At the time the survey was administered, CGSOC students had completed their core curriculum requirements in "Combat Operations" (P118)--or "tactics"--and the "Joint and Strategic Environments" (P511) course. The tactics course entailed a study and application of the operational and tactical theory contained in FM 100-5 and its derivative

manuals. Officers learned tactical operations at brigade, division, and corps level through the medium of recurring practical exercises. The P511 course focused on the strategic and theater warfare plans, U.S. interests, national and military defense policies, national defense, and national military organizations.

During the course of the year, revolutionary events in Eastern Europe had constantly been in the forefront of the students' attention. Six weeks prior to the administration to the survey, the U.S. intervened in Panama, and high level Army leaders had come to brief the student body. CGSC students had not yet studied Vietnam in the core curriculum course, "Evolution of Modern Warfare."

### **Survey Results**

Two respondents penned some remarks on their surveys alleging that the survey was prejudiced. In the interests of methodological integrity, those comments must be presented and answered here before the survey results themselves appear. This will give the reader an opportunity to judge for himself as to the objectivity of the survey instrument itself and the results obtained therefrom. These two separate comments were:

Comment 1

This survey is strongly biased. It would be difficult for you to reach any conclusion other than (1.) U.S. Army officers are not well read about Vietnam; (2.) More emphasis on Vietnam in the professional schools is needed. These arguments, however much I may agree, are not strongly supported by this survey. If you redesign the survey, try to include other responses that may lead to a different conclusion.

Comment 2

A poorly constructed survey--reflecting biased attitudes of the author to objective[ly] lend acceptability to his subjective opinions. It seems the author is seeking "facts" to support this. Also, the interaction between U.S. policy and the Armed Forces in Vietnam is not addressed.

As for the first comment alleging "bias" for a survey conceived to arrive at the conclusions suggested, the following points are made: First, immediately after Question "Q", there is a "LIST BOOKS, ARTICLES" fill-in-the-blank section which allows the respondent to list books not covered on the previous "J" through "O" questions. Additionally, Question "P" allows respondents to tell whether or not books have been the primary influence on their attitudes on Vietnam. Also, Question "Q" solicits additional information about books and the time in the officer's career when he had time to reflect about Vietnam. Finally, Question "R" allows the survey to get some assessment as to other sources that influence attitudes other than books. The purpose of the survey, as stated in

the opening portion to this section of the methodology, is consistent with what is stated on the face of the first page of the survey--to assess what the current generation of CGSOC officers perceive to be the "lessons" of Vietnam. To have gone any further and disclosed the Department of Joint and Combined Operations' interest in assessing the impact of its "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" instruction would have invited prejudiced responses that might have deliberately or unconsciously entered "expected" answers to the "source of influence" questions.

The questions "J" through "O" list books and works that focus on the schools of thought relevant to the strategic military legacy of Vietnam. The book menu covers the wide gamut of books offered on the lessons offered.

Books which probe the strategic-military legacy of Vietnam represent appropriate subjects for CGSC students. At the intermediate schooling level, officers first come into contact with strategic issues. Legacies relate to attitudes. Since the current Vietnam generation of officers with ground combat experience is passing out of the officer corps, what the successor generation of officers relies on to develop its "intellectual capital" is of no small importance.

As to the second comment, its author has incorrectly "divined" the purpose of the survey. His divination of what

the survey author's opinions are is a bit vague at best. The survey was not constructed to manufacture facts, but to make an honest attempt at getting a feel for attitudes towards the Vietnam War and the source of those attitudes, be they from inside or outside the institution. In each of the questions from "P" to "AD", the survey respondent is provided with clear choices among existing schools of thought on the Vietnam War and other related issues. The survey's author cannot claim the intellectual ownership of any of these schools of thought. Furthermore, the survey's purpose is not to support one particular school of thought over another, but only to ascertain where the current generation of Army officers comes down in relation to their views on the Vietnam War. The only "facts" that will get manufactured will be how the respondents scored their attitudes vis a vis the schools of thought. As for the issue of construction, it is equally difficult to divine what the criticism aims at. If by "structure" the comment means the absence of a relationship between U.S. policy and the Armed Forces, then those questions are implicit in any of the "lessons" offered to choose from in questions "T" (responses 3, 4), "V" (responses 2,3), and "X" (responses 2, 4). The following table shows the overall demographics of the survey respondents:



TABLE 3-5  
DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Vietnam Vet - - - - - International Officer	Rank		Year Group	Armed Service
BEFORE (200)	11 (5.5%) - - - - - 13 (6.5%)	Captain 23 (11.5%) Major/Cdr 172 (86.0%) LTC 3 (1.5%) Colonel 2 (1%)		1973 5 (2.5%) 1974 12 (6.0%) 1975 32 (16%) 1976 42 (21%) 1977 52 (26%) 1978 32 (16%) 1979 18 (3.5%) OTHER/ NO RESPONSE 7 (3.5%)	ARMY 171 (85.5%) NAVY 2 (1%) USAF 11 (5.5%) MARINES 3 (1.5%) INT'L 13 (6.5%)
AFTER (192)	8 (4.1%) - - - - - 17 (8.8%)	Captain 32 (16.6%) Major/Cdr 153 (79.1%) LTC 7 (3.6%) Colonel 0 (0%)		1973 11 (5.7%) 1974 9 (4.6%) 1975 33 (17.1%) 1976 31 (16.1%) 1977 46 (23.9%) 1978 40 (20.8%) 1979 14 (7.9%) OTHER/NO RESPONSE 8 (4.1%)	ARMY 161 (83.8%) NAVY 2 (1%) USAF 10 (5.2%) MARINES 2 (1%) INT'L 17 (8.8%)
TOTAL (392)	19 (4.8%) - - - - - 30 (7.6%)	Captain 55 (14%) Major/Cdr 325 (82.9%) LTC 10 (2.5%) Colonel 2 (.5%)		1973 16 (4%) 1974 21 (5.3%) 1975 65 (16.5%) 1976 73 (18.6%) 1977 98 (25%) 1978 72 (18.3%) 1979 32 (8.1%) OTHER/NO RESPONSE 15 (3.8%)	ARMY 332 (84.6%) NAVY 4 (1%) USAF 22 (5.6%) MARINES 5 (.2%) INT'L 30 (7.6%)

Other key demographic features in relation to the survey show that 63.2 percent of the respondents came on active duty after April 1975, with no prior enlisted service, and 15.5 percent came on active duty prior to 1975 with no prior enlisted time. 52 percent of the entire sample were combat arms officers (infantry, armor, field artillery, aviation, air defense, special forces,

engineers); 12.7 percent were combat support officers (signal corps, military intelligence, military police); 18.6 percent were combat service support officers (adjutant general, quartermaster, ordnance, finance, medical service, chemical). Of the total 392 respondents, nineteen (4.8 percent) served in Vietnam. During the 1989-1990 Command and General Staff College Academic Year 35 Vietnam veterans attended the course.<sup>88</sup>

In the survey of books section, out of 392 responses, the top five books indicated as having been read by the post-Vietnam generation of officers were Harry G. Summers' On Strategy (136 responses); Andrew Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam (104 responses); William Westmoreland's A Soldier Reports (fifty-four responses); Stanley Karnow's Vietnam: A History (forty-eight responses); Michael McLearn's The Ten Thousand Day War (forty-six responses); and Dave Richard Palmer's The Summons of the Trumpet (thirty-one responses).

Equally significant was the number of books not read. If the "I have read none of these books" responses were aggregated for questions J-P and averaged, the overall negative reading response to the twenty-four books listed would be 152 out of the overall sample of 392 (38.7 percent). Another interesting sidelight is that the United States Command and General Staff College's Professional

Reading Program (PRP) lists Andrew F. Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam as required reading.<sup>89</sup> The PRP requires students to purchase Krepinevich's book and the academic departments are required to base as much of their instruction on it as possible. Apparently, with respect at least to Krepinevich's book, approximately 26 percent of those surveyed indicated compliance with the college's requirement at the seven month mark in the academic year.

As for the section of the survey which asked the respondents to list books and articles read, but omitted from the previous list, it elicited 122 total responses with indications of having read anywhere from one to ten books each. Some of the overall 122 responses were non-responses (seven) with no particular book or article title or author supplied. While there were a number of good books listed which would allow the reader to focus on the strategic-military problems posed by the war, the majority of the indicated reading may be classified as pop histories, novels, war stories, individual accounts, or books that focused only on one event or one aspect of the war instead of its strategic breadth. Of the books most frequently listed in this category we find: Neil Sheehan's Bright and Shining Lie (eighteen entries of 122); Bernard Fall's Street Without Joy (fourteen entries of 122); John Hackworth's About Face (eight entries of 122); Phil Caputo's A Rumor of

War (eight entries of 122); David Halberstam's The Best and The Brightest (six entries of 122); and finally, Bernard Fall's Hell in a Very Small Place (five entries of 122).

The authors and books which seem to be exercising the greatest influence over the respondents are: Harry Summers' On Strategy (sixty-two responses); Andrew Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam (fifteen responses); George Herring's America's Longest War (four responses); and Stanley Karnow's Vietnam: A History (four responses). However, the same survey question included as an alternative answer the option not to list books and to disclaim books as a source of influence on officers' views. A total of 191 respondents so indicated and another seventy left the entire question blank, indicating that 261 of the 392 respondents (66.5 percent) had not been influenced by books.

Referring back to the book survey, the respondents were asked where did they read these books and reflect on the "lessons" of Vietnam. 44 percent indicated that they had done so as a result of their own personal initiative. The next popular response was the CGSC core curriculum. The indication that there had been a reflection on Vietnam jumped from 6.7 percent in the BEFORE "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" instruction to 21.5 percent in the AFTER "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" instruction.

The influence of senior officers was the most frequently cited "other source" which influenced the post-Vietnam generation of officers in attendance at CGSC. The most frequently cited other sources on officer attitudes towards Vietnam, in order, were mentors, the media, father/family/friends, or relatives who had served in Vietnam. As for "other influences" from inside the military institution, CGSC appeared in twenty-four of the responses, with fewer responses indicating officer advanced courses (eight) and the U.S. Military Academy (three). 60 percent of the respondents indicated that these "other sources" had influenced them more than books.

In the section of the survey that focused in on the CGSC generation's general and specific views on the war, officers consistently faulted the U.S. big-unit strategy for not fitting the realities of insurgent warfare. This choice also included words that stated "By failing to both properly address, and adequately resource... population security and pacification... the U.S. ignored the political, economic, and social aspects of the struggle." This attitude was shared by 53 percent of the sample both going into and coming out of the "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" (hereinafter referred to as P552) instruction at the CGSC. Arrayed against this counterinsurgency school choice was the "stab in the back" response that blames the press, Congress,

and civilian leadership with the responsibility for U.S. failure. Only 15 percent of the officers elected this choice going into P552, and dropped to 10 percent upon exiting P552 instruction. The "no-win" school choice was also available within the same question; 14 percent of the officers choose this response when entering P552, 22 percent upon departing.

The conventional school choice was also represented in the same range of selection and started with the popular refrain from Summers' On Strategy--"tactical victory, strategic defeat." The choice for the conventional school argument employed the ideas advanced by Summers regarding winning battles but losing the war for failure to recognize the enemy's true center of gravity--the North Vietnamese Army. Only 9 percent of CGSC officers selected this response before receiving P552 instruction, 7 percent afterwards. These results point to an interesting phenomenon. As discussed previously, Summers' On Strategy was the most widely read book in the survey's sample. It was also overwhelmingly singled out from other works as the most influential book in the survey's sample. Yet, the arguments set forth by On Strategy were not selected as the respondents' overall governing attitude about Vietnam.

This attitude proves to be internally consistent with the results of the following questions that offer a

variety of choices among the counterinsurgency, conventional, and "no-win" schools of thought. When asked to decide on the nature of the war, only 2.5 percent viewed Vietnam as a conventional war before their CGSC P552 course, 1 percent afterwards. Officers preferred to call Vietnam a revolutionary war (32 percent before/40.6 percent after) or an all new type of war that combined both revolutionary and conventional war (47.5 percent before/44.2 percent after). Again, these attitudes continued to be consistent when only 12 to 13 percent of the officers believed that a ground invasion of North Vietnam would have carried the war to the enemy's homeland, destroying his center of gravity, and ultimately resulting in North Vietnam's defeat. In a shift from what has previously been reported in relation to overall attitudes, when confronted with this North Vietnam invasion strategy, officers shifted more in favor of the "no-win" school outlook which viewed such an invasion as politically and militarily impossible.

In respect to the efficacy of military force to achieve results at three key junctures during the war (Rolling Thunder, TET, and Linebacker II), officers tended to shy away from responses that claimed military force was decisive (TET) or instrumental in achieving U.S. objectives (Rolling Thunder, Linebacker II). The most disturbing aspect of this series of questions is reflected in the large

percentage of officers who did not know enough about these three key events to form opinions (sometimes as high as 55 percent).

Officers of the post-Vietnam generation overwhelmingly found Vietnam to be relevant (82 percent before/86 percent after). Additionally, 56 percent of the sample concluded that Vietnam would influence or play a role in their decision making as they advanced to more senior levels of leadership. 37 percent opted for the choice that said Vietnam would have a mixed influence, but would not be pervasive.

In assessing the doctrinal adequacy of FM 100-5 and FM 100-20, officers found that FM 100-5 did not adequately address the entire warfighting spectrum and that the division of doctrine between FM 100-5 and FM 100-20 tended to artificially divide the spectrum of warfare (72.5 percent before/62 percent after).

As a check on the survey data, a closing question inquired about any recent changes in attitudes that officers might have experienced. Before entering P552, only 16 percent reported as having experienced a change in attitude, attributing that change to CGSC instruction, and citing courses offered by the Department of Joint and Combined Operations as the sources of the attitude change (Joint and Strategic Environment Course - P511, and Operational



Warfighting - P157). 28.6 percent reported a change in attitude after having taken P552 instruction, attributing their change of attitude to P552 and P511 instruction (thirty-one responses). P552 and P511 occurred in conjunction with other CGSC courses such as P118 (Combat Operations) and A695 (American Experience in Vietnam) in addition to the thirty-one responses mentioned.

#### **METHODOLOGY SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Against the schools of thought on the "lessons" or "legacy" of Vietnam presented in Chapter Two, this chapter started with a discordant picture of how Vietnam-era policy makers viewed the war. Against this incoherent assessment of legacies about American policy ends or objectives in Vietnam, the military withdrew from the post-war debate to shore up its prestige and doctrine, and to refocus on American commitments to NATO. Counterinsurgency doctrine and instruction ebbed and then began to trickle back into service school curricula. Vietnam of late has become a subject of historical study and assessment within the middle and senior service school systems. Chapter Four will now turn to a full discussion of the research and its meaning.

### CHAPTER 3

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74 The basis for my calculation is as follows: The number of class hours for the Combat Operations (tactics) Subcourse is 194. Additionally, sixty-six lab hours are required in support of the subcourse. Finally, all combat arms and combat support arms officers are required to take ninety hours of Applied Tactical Operations (A396) as an "elective." This totals 350 hours. 350 divided by 39 (LIC hours) equals 8.97--or, as rounded off--9.

75 As will be seen in the next section which reports on a survey administered to the 1989-1990 CGSOC class, the demographic data reveals that out of 392 survey responses received (of 500 administered within a class of 943), over 60 percent indicated their branches to be combat arms or combat support officers, 18 percent to be combat service support officers. The class is broken down into staff groups of fifteen to sixteen students each, and the CGSC randomly distributes officers within each staff group to balance combat arms, combat support, and combat service support, sister service and international officers.

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## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter presents, explains, analyzes, and interprets the evidence produced from the previous chapter's methodology. Additionally, this chapter will discuss the interrelationships of the evidence, looking back to the research question presented in Chapter One, "Introduction." This interpretative chapter will set the stage for the fifth and final chapter of the thesis where conclusions and recommendations will be made as a result of the research and analysis.

As a brief reminder, the research question emerged from a curiosity about how the post-Vietnam Army had come to terms with Vietnam's strategic legacy. Accordingly, this analytical chapter will pursue a search for the Army's "conventional wisdom" through the eyes of a member of the Army's post-Vietnam generation. I have deliberately adopted this approach as a framework for this chapter because I again wish to return to issue of "intellectual capital" provided to successor generations on what Vietnam means in a



strategic context. General Vuono's quote in the first chapter speaks of the Army's role in low-intensity conflict. General Galvin's quote from the previous chapter ties the importance of a Vietnam assessment directly to the Army's low-intensity conflict mission.

Low-intensity conflict as an Army strategic mission did not spring from a vacuum. Joint Chiefs of Staff Pub 2 Unified Action Armed Forces tasks the Armed Services to have forces organized, trained and equipped to "prosecute operations in war and short of war."<sup>1</sup> Those operations "short of war" encompass low-intensity conflict as defined previously. Also, President Bush's National Security Strategy (March 1990) employs the same concept. In the section dealing with "Relating Means to Ends: Our Defense Agenda," the President defines low-intensity conflict as the "struggle... below the level of conventional war."<sup>2</sup> As a matter of policy, the same section makes it very clear that American forces... must be capable of dealing effectively with the full range of threats, including insurgency and terrorism.... we will also pursue new and innovative ways to apply flexible general purpose forces to these problems."<sup>3</sup>

## IN SEARCH OF A STRATEGIC LEGACY

For the member of the Army's post-Vietnam generation attempting to come to terms with his own institution's synthesis of its Vietnam experience, he quickly finds considerably more than a single, exhaustive, comprehensive analysis. Outside his institution the postwar debate has raged on since before the fall of Saigon. Inside his institution, the postwar debate has been considerably muted in comparison with the fight for the historical high ground by post-Vietnam revisionists. Although the BDM Vietnam "Lessons Learned" inquest was initiated and completed, Summers' On Strategy published, and the U.S. Army Center of Military History's efforts for a comprehensive history got underway, they cumulatively pale in comparison to the attention given the war outside the Army. This seems strange for the very institution charged with the war's prosecution.

Although the post-Vietnam officer generation seems to have no trouble locating Summers' On Strategy, they also look outside the institution for other postwar assessments. Depending on which author he turns to or book he reads, the post-Vietnam officer corps could find itself unduly influenced by a particular school of thought. Since the literature on Vietnam is so extensive, he may not be fully aware of all the counter-arguments or competing theories.

Officers without experience in Vietnam, about to inherit the Army and its Vietnam experience, must conduct their own critical assessments from a veritable thicket of legacies. In addition, this generation will be beset by gaping holes in what has been bequeathed to it.

If the post-Vietnam Army turns to what former policy makers have left for posterity on Vietnam, their collective contributions leave much to be desired. The prime architect of military policy and strategy during the war, Robert S. McNamara, maintained utter silence until forced to testify at the Westmoreland libel suit against CBS in 1984. Even then, McNamara proved incapable of passing judgments that would lead to any wisdom on the war's strategic legacy. His CBS testimony stated "my memory is imperfect [and] I do not believe a participant should be the judge of his own actions."<sup>4</sup> This comes closer to an excuse for self-absolution than a justification for not having employed his experience and brilliant mind for the purpose of a useful strategic assessment on Vietnam.

The World War II generation of policy makers, architects of the policies in Vietnam, have by and large penned their memories from the safety of retirement. Except for some appearances at the first postwar "seminars" held in the mid-1970s, these men have not reached out to engage in a full blown "lessons learned" reappraisal that would benefit

future generations. This is of no small importance to the future military leader who must have some frank assessment of the "ends" pursued in Indochina. Instead, the successor generation has inherited nothing more than a collection of intensely subjective assessments which, in some cases like Richard Nixon's No More Vietnams, come across as patently self-serving.

Given this reality, the post-Vietnam Army officer must look to sources other than former policy makers in the hopes of discovering a workable critical assessment that will supply the intellectual capital needed to prepare him for those future tough decisions. However, this search gets quickly sidetracked among any number of competing theories.<sup>5</sup>

First, there is the "3W" theory: "Wrong War, in the Wrong Place, at the Wrong Time." This theory asserts that several historical forces converged in time and place, making American failure inevitable. The force of nationalism, unleashed by the post-World War II decolonization, and harnessed by the ideological and organizational impetus supplied by communism, transformed Vietnam into a stage where an American version of a Greek tragedy played itself out. Predictably, fate crushed American hubris. We recall that Frances FitzGerald's lyrical closing paragraph to Fire in the Lake warned that "pressure is building towards one of those historical shifts when "individualism" and its

attendant corruptions gives way to the discipline of the revolutionary community." Osgood's Limited War Revisited clearly fits in with this particular theory when he found South Vietnamese government and society to be so fractured that no amount of U.S. effort could have sufficed. Halberstam's Best and the Brightest elaborated on the hubris theme and George Ball expanded upon it during his "lessons learned" testimony before Congress.

If this explanation is found wanting, the "political defeat" theory then presents itself for acceptance. The popular refrain "we won every battle but lost the war" captures the essence and appeal of this excuse. Harry Summers' On Strategy fits in this category as do parts of Bruce Palmer's The 25-Year War. It also advances the related themes that the U.S. involvement in Vietnam represented a colossal miscalculation of vital American interests. Further, liberal politicians brought the U.S. into the war, quickly lost patience, and broke faith with an ally. They left successor, more conservative administrations to "police up the battlefield." American presidents did not consult their generals and instead listened to their senior civilian advisors. Finally, this theory will argue for the delusion visited upon American strategic thinking due to the "Great Fallacy." The "Great Fallacy" entailed an unnecessary, self-imposed strategic constraint on the

application of military means due to an exaggerated fear of confrontation with North Vietnam's two benefactors--the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union. This crippled America's ability to effectively prosecute the war.

The third theory, a harsher variant of the last, can be labeled the "stab in the back school of political defeat." Essentially, it holds that the nation abandoned the military on the battlefield. Of all the enemies that America faced in Vietnam, the North Vietnamese were the least important. The true enemies were defeatist politicians, the radical youth, an irresponsible media, and a society in general that failed to "stay the course" in political will. Although this particular theory does not surface in the "Review of Literature," it nevertheless is part of the American culture in which the American military lives. The most popular images that characterize this school are to be found in the Rambo image and its recurring film sequels, and the missing in action "prisoners" still held in North Vietnam as popularized by the Chuck Norris "rescue" movies.

The fourth variant espouses the theory that Vietnam represented a military failure. The military are blamed for transforming a limited, political-military struggle into a European style mid-intensity conflict. Military managers, as opposed to leaders, fought the war. The "can do"

attitude superseded the "duty, honor, country" ethic. The tour length policy is frequently cited as the manifestation of all that was wrong with the military prosecution of the war.

Finally, as a separate category in itself although it has been mentioned in part earlier, the "arrogant media" theory confronts the post-Vietnam generation. Here, a disloyal press puts itself above national interests and deliberately distorted the American people's perception of the realities in Vietnam. The precipitous souring of American attitudes after the TET offensive serves as the best example. Under this view, the press' values proved completely antithetical to those required on the battlefield. This theory credits the breaking of the national will completely to the "fourth estate." Despite its protestations about the first amendment, and the right of the American people to know, the press really pursues its own self-interest for selling papers or maintaining high ratings.

The twisting and turning postwar debate on legacies confounds rather than enlightens. The post-Vietnam generation must then turn to its own institution to make sense out of this chaos. In so doing, he finds that the Army has passed through various stages. Physicians, psychiatrists, and psychologists tell us that when human

beings have a traumatic experience, they move through a relatively predictable cycle of denial, anger, a search for knowledge, and resolution. In a very real sense, the Army as a human institution, has passed through a similar progression of discernible stages in coming to terms with its Vietnam trauma.

#### **DENIAL--NO MORE VIETNAMS--ANGER--THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE**

##### **Denial**

Army postmortems on Vietnam during the mid-1970s, besides being too close in time to the war itself for historical detachment, were consciously avoided. The Army's attention locked onto the doctrinal revolution spearheaded by General DePuy. He held the somewhat irreverent, if not cynical view that Vietnam postmortems would have smacked of "revisionism, alibis, self-justification, rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, opening old wounds, [or] severe mental retardation given public attitudes."<sup>6</sup>

The creation of the Army's new Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), General DePuy's TRADOC stewardship, and the publication of FM 100-5, Operations (1976), converged to engineer the strategic and doctrinal reorientation of the United States Army. If there was any single repository of



the Army's reorientation in mission, strategic outlook, and renewed sense of purpose, it was FM 100-5 which stated:

Because the Army is structured primarily for [battle in Central Europe against forces of the Warsaw Pact] and has large forces deployed in that area, this manual is designed mainly to deal with the realities of such operations. The principles set forth in this manual however, apply also to military operations anywhere in the world (emphasis added).

The Army did not seize upon the European reorientation out of thin air. President Nixon's State of the World message to Congress delivered on May 3, 1973 declared the "year of Europe."<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, an earlier 1970 review of military strategy headed up by Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard explicitly stated that Europe rated as the top region for U.S. strategic interests.<sup>9</sup> Whatever the source of the true impetus, be it a policy driven European focus or a seizure upon an available opportunity, what did transpire equated to a conscious, if not welcome, opportunity to turn from Vietnam. In essence, the conceptual union of large conventional forces under a worldwide rubric for military operations became the functional equivalent of "No More Vietnams" for the Army.

The evidence in the military journals supports this characterization. During this time frame when FM 100-5 appeared, the professional attention on Vietnam in the military journals was practically non-existent. The

military school system "purged" its files on Vietnam. One member of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College faculty related an interesting anecdote to support this. When an Asian country came to the United States soon after the fall of Saigon for help in countering insurgency, members of one of the first post-Vietnam classes at the Command and General Staff College were assembled and sent to their branch schools (infantry, military intelligence, etc.) to find material in order to present a briefing to satisfy the Asian country's request. They reached their branch schools and returned to Fort Leavenworth with a common experience. They found that the schools had purged all the files and instructional materials on Vietnam. With them went a considerable portion of the institutional memory. This "purge" led one of the officers selected to prepare the briefing for the Asian country to conclude "we don't do dishes, we don't do windows, and we don't do insurgencies."

Low-intensity conflict doctrinal development gives substance to this refrain. Anyone who has served in the Army since 1975 would be hard pressed not to notice the relative doctrinal poverty of FM 100-20, Low-Intensity Conflict, when compared to its sister manual, FM 100-5, Operations. FM 100-5 represents the trunk of a doctrinal tree that extends outward into what the Army calls its 71-series, or combined arms manuals (e.g. FM 71-100, Division

Operations, FM 71-3, Armored and Mechanized Brigade, FM 71-2, The Armored and Mechanized Infantry Battalion Task Force).

These combined arms manuals father yet another generation of doctrinal manuals which provide tactics, techniques, and procedures for the Army's basic branches such as infantry, artillery, armor, aviation, air defense, and engineers. Examples of branch doctrinal manuals include FM 7-10, The Infantry Rifle Company, FM 6-20, Fire Support in Combined Arms Operations, FM 17-95, Cavalry, FM 1-112, Attack Helicopter Battalion, FM 44-1, U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery Employment, and FM 5-100, Engineer Combat Operations.

Although passing reference is made to low-intensity conflict in both FM 100-5 and some of the manuals mentioned, the text devoted to it does not approach the attention given "warfighting" in a European environment. From my own personal experience in resident study at the Command and General Staff College, the 350 hours devoted to the study of tactical operations did not stray from central European scenarios. The employment of Army general purpose forces in scenarios other than large combined arms formations did not take place. For instance, little detailed attention was given to the employment of special operations forces. The stated U.S. national security strategy for "imaginative ways

to apply flexible general purpose forces to these [low-intensity conflict] problems" is not supported by the tactical scenarios currently employed to teach CGSC students.<sup>10</sup>

For purposes of balance, it should be noted that the CGSOC curriculum will be redesigned for the 1991-1992 Academic Year. The ratio of prosecution in war, FM 100-5 to FM 100-20, operations short of war, will drop from nine to one to five to one in accordance with the proposals now under consideration.<sup>11</sup> The decided emphasis on "prosecution in war" subjects will be retained. The proposed CGSOC restated mission carries the essence of this emphasis when it states "[the CGSOC mission is] to educate selected officers who can conduct military operations in peace, conflict and war in accordance with established doctrine and with emphasis at corps and division level."<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, we look to FM 100-20 as the "trunk" for the low-intensity conflict doctrinal tree only to find that its core concepts for terrorism, peacekeeping operations, counterinsurgency, and peacetime contingency operations have not been fleshed out into a coherent doctrinal regime approximating the warfighting side of the house just described. This does not comply with Joint Chiefs of Staff Pub 2, Unified Action Armed Forces which charges all armed services to have forces organized, trained, and equipped to

"prosecute operations in war and short of war."<sup>13</sup> Although some military officers scoff at the notion that doctrine is important, the post-Vietnam Army has deliberately employed it as the driving concept to rationalize force structure, equipment acquisition, training, and education. FM 100-20 has not been the same type of centerpiece for preparing to prosecute those actions "short of war." In no way has FM 100-20 garnered the same level of intellectual attention or institutional effort as FM 100-5.

This can be traced back to how the Army seized upon the 1976 version of FM 100-5, Operations, as the mechanism for its strategic, structural, and psychological reorientation after Vietnam. We have already seen from a Leavenworth Paper that one of the avowed purposes of the 1976 "revolution" was to put Vietnam aside. Subsequent updates to FM 100-5 during 1982 and 1986 absorbed much of the Army's attention as evidenced by articles appearing in the Military Review. The cluster of articles which addressed perceived shortcomings in FM 100-5 (lack of offensive spirit, operational level focus, or logistical balance) testify to the weight and resources accorded to "prosecution in war." By contrast, the absence of military journal articles on Vietnam, the decline in service school curriculum hours in low-intensity conflict, and the relatively late attention accorded low-intensity conflict as something "short of war,"

speaks to the difficulty of discerning the presence of a strategic legacy for Vietnam. This reminds one of a passage from Colonel Roger Trinquier's Modern Warfare:

We still persist in studying a type of warfare that no longer exists and that we shall never fight again, while we pay only passing attention to the war we lost in Indochina and the one we are about to lose in Algeria. Yet the abandonment of Indochina or Algeria is just as important for France as would be the loss of a metropolitan province. The result of this shortcoming is that the Army is not prepared to confront an adversary employing arms and methods the Army itself ignores.<sup>14</sup>

Trinquier, a French officer who saw service during the first Indochina War, overstates the case here. The United States will certainly have to maintain the conventional capability developed for Europe. Some Middle East countries have as many tanks as the U.S. has deployed in Germany. Therefore, it is not true that the FM 100-5 type of warfare "no longer exists." However, what is true is that there has been a decided imbalance between the two spheres of activity the JCS has charged the Army to prepare for, i.e. "prosecution in war and short of war." In this sense, the part of Trinquier's epigram which applies most refers to the "passing attention to the war we lost in Indochina."

Passing attention given to other than European wars has not been an isolated phenomenon in the Army's long

history. Andrew J. Bacevich's June 1982 article entitled "Disagreeable Work: Pacifying The Moros, 1903-1906" noted "Our Army's penchant for forgetting nasty tropical wars is well-known. We do not care to dwell on insurgencies that make up in moral ambiguity what they lack of the decisiveness attributed to conventional war."<sup>15</sup>

Bacevich captured the nature of the Army's denial of its Vietnam experience during the crucial 1976 doctrinal reorientation period. Simultaneous to the publication of the 1976 FM 100-5, Operations, he penned the following words in the 1976 September-October edition of Armor magazine:

Today the Army--like the nation as a whole--has set about forgetting Vietnam with a vengeance.... The post-Vietnam reaction has subtly distorted the Army's perspective. It has imperceptibly transformed conventional war, admittedly a feasible contingency, into a sure bet because--in contrast to Vietnam at least--it is the kind of war the Army wants to fight.

However, from a review of the military professional journals from 1976-1980, Bacevich's words cried like a voice in the wilderness. If anything, the FM 100-5 reorientation supported Professor Weigley's point that the Army was again preparing for the last *satisfactory* war. Weigley's criticism did not derive from a passing observation about the Army and Vietnam alone. His authoritative History of the United States Army traced a clear "historical pattern" for Army attitudes relating to unconventional war.<sup>16</sup> The

Army's wide experience with this type of warfare dates back to the American Revolution. The Seminole Wars, the Philippine Insurrection, and Vietnam have all culminated in an Army view of conventional warfare that is "incongruous to the natural methods and habits of a stable and well-to-do society."<sup>17</sup> Weigley's final word on the matter concluded that the Army has looked upon unconventional conflict as "abnormal" and has tried "to forget about it whenever possible."<sup>18</sup>

#### Anger--Turning Inward

The Army's doctrinal revolution and European reorientation bypassed the next stage in human reaction to trauma--anger. Unlike the post-World War I literature produced by German generals, such as Hindenburg, that alleged a "stab in the back," the U.S. Army did not engage in any such vitriolic form of postwar revisionism. Such a reaction would have betrayed anger. Moreover, an angry Army might have been an expected reaction given the lightning rod like role forced upon it as opposition to the war reached its climax in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, no Army outcry ever developed. Harry Summers has frequently pointed to this positive finding. In 1981 he wrote, "One of the more simplistic explanations for our failure in Vietnam is that it was all the fault of the American people--that it



was caused by a collapse of national will. Happily for the health of the Republic, this evasion is rare among Army officers."<sup>19</sup> Professor John Lovell of the University of Indiana, who participated at a 1985 West Point sponsored symposium on Vietnam, arrived at a similar conclusion. He found no "stab in the back" syndrome had developed as a direct consequence of the Vietnam War. Lovell stated that the "fundamentally healthy relationship of the military to the civilian sector of the government and to society at large had been preserved."<sup>20</sup>

My survey results tend to support Summers' and Lovell's assertion. When asked to choose among four alternatives which included the "stab in the back" option, an average of 12 percent selected the response which blamed the press, the Congress, or the civilian leadership.

My survey findings also dispute the near "stab in the back" allegation made by the former Morrison Professor of History against CGSC students. Dr. Peter Maslowski excoriated CGSC students for foisting the blame for failure outside the Army. To quote Maslowski:

But when the [CGSC] classes got to Vietnam, it became obvious that discovering errors in past victorious war... was entirely different from admitting errors in a recent, clear cut defeat.

... When classes discussed Vietnam, an iron curtain of preconceived notions slammed down. The students believed they already knew [*italics in original*] what caused defeat: yellow-streaked

politicians, irresponsible journalism, and the collapse of home front morale.<sup>21</sup>

Given the option to choose among four alternatives, only 15 percent of my classmates elected the refrain that "the press, Congress, and the civilian leadership" of the nation caused the U.S. failure to achieve its objectives in Vietnam. In fact, contrary to what Maslowski would have us believe, CGSC students faulted U.S. strategy (53 percent) for U.S. failure. That CGSC officers tend to foist the blame for failure on those outside the military cannot be supported by the investigation I have conducted into their prevailing attitudes. Perhaps a vocal minority has given Dr. Maslowski cause to rail against CGSC officers, but to characterize these views as representative, as Maslowski does, is very much open to question.

If some basis for criticizing CGSC students exists, it lies with their reading habits and basis for a critical assessment for the attitudes they have expressed. The data suggests that the Command and General Staff College's Professional Reading Program is not being complied with. Only 104 of 392 respondents (26.5 percent) indicated they had read Andrew F. Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam. Moreover, the source of the intellectual capital relied upon to form critical assessments on Vietnam appears to be non-existent. Reading highly subjective or personalized accounts of the war or "pop histories" (e.g. Sheehan's

Bright and Shining Lie; Hackworth's About Face; or Platoon) fails the test of being classified as substantive critical strategic assessments. The postwar "lessons" literature of collected essays have not been consulted by a majority of officers (e.g., W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson Frizzell's The Lessons of Vietnam; John Schlight, ed. The Second Indochina War Symposium; Lawrence E. Grinter and Peter M. Dunn, eds. The American War in Vietnam: Lessons, Legacies and Implications for Future Conflicts; Lloyd J. Matthews and Dale E. Brown, Assessing the Vietnam War). When On Strategy is listed as the most influential work, then its arguments are rejected, it leaves open the possibility of not having understood what was read. Although officers indicated reading On Strategy and The Army and Vietnam, in reality only 34 percent and 26 percent respectively of the sample indicated having done so.

However, the blame does not devolve entirely upon the students themselves. The survey also indicates that the source of their attitudes derives from sources outside their institution. During CGSC they receive some formalized focus on the strategic questions posed by the war. However, it remains clear that before arrival at CGSC, the Army has directed no appreciable attention to Vietnam other than admonitions to officers to do professional readings. This not only applies to Vietnam, but to the study of war in

general. The CGSC Professional Reading Program represents a step in the right direction, but the number of books on the reading list is too small to be of any consequence for Vietnam or any other topic of war. What's more, the program applies to the year of study at CGSC only. It is as if professional military education's responsibility begins and ends at arrival and graduation. Perhaps General Galvin had the right idea in 1989 when he wrote that "military schools should be in contact with their graduates at all times, helping to form them into a professional society. A school's job is not complete at graduation. At each level, the school should keep the officers up-to-date with new developments and advise them... of articles and books worth reading."<sup>22</sup> I will return to this point in Chapter Five, but we now need to return to the anger, and turning inward stage of the Army's reaction to Vietnam.

If there was any identifiable anger it was vented outside the Army by postwar military revisionists such as William Westmoreland, in his book A Soldier Reports. The closest approximation to an expression of anger within the Army transpired in 1976. General Fred C. Weyand and Lieutenant Colonel Harry G. Summers co-authored an article in two Army journals that attacked the then popular Vietnam mythology which portrayed the war as immoral and unjust.<sup>23</sup> This rebuttal also included a rejection of the notion that

the United States withdrew from Vietnam as a result of defeats on the battlefield.<sup>24</sup> In fact, it is difficult to characterize this single article as an expression of anger at all. It also stressed the importance of the link between a democratic Army and the people.<sup>25</sup>

The 1977 publication of Douglas Kinnard's The War Managers represents the closest approximation to an expression of Army frustration, yet still falls short of being characterized as anger. Again, Kinnard had retired from the Army by the time of his book's publication, as had many of the respondents to his survey. It revealed a broad dissatisfaction among military commanders who had prosecuted the war under the gradualist approach forced upon them. His study documented a disillusionment with the civilian management of the war, faulting it for their inability to clearly identify U.S. objectives. Although critical, Kinnard's findings in no way advanced a "stab in the back" thesis nor expressed any deep seated anger that betrayed fissures between the military and its civilian government.

This is not to say that anger did not exist in the Army as a result of its Vietnam trauma. Certainly certain quarters of the Army felt left out in the cold after the Army shifted again to a European focus. The Army reduced the seven Special Forces Groups that existed in Vietnam.<sup>26</sup> Three exist now (the 5th, 7th and 10th Special Forces

Groups).<sup>27</sup> The Army has only recently created a special forces career track for officers. Although there may have very well been a deep-seated anger within the Army, it never reached the level of a consciously articulated institutional expression to the civilian leadership then or since in power. Nor has any venting of the Army's spleen been visited upon the American people.

Instead, a conscious decision to turn inward supplanted anger. In fact, if anger did exist, the Army channeled its raw energy in a more productive direction. If denial turned away from Vietnam, turning inward complemented this conscious break with the Army's Indochina experience. Many seemingly disparate events fostered the Army's introspective retreat from Vietnam. The FM 100-5 doctrinal revolution pierced the Army to its very core. Units began to concentrate their energies on meeting the FM 100-5 derivative training and evaluation standards demanded by the newly published Army Training and Evaluation Programs (ARTEPs). A great ferment occurred in Army training and leadership philosophies. Europe, stripped by the ravages of Vietnam War support, received renewed attention. The Army made the Volunteer Army work. Command emphasis focused on ridding the Army of low quality performers left over from the draft Vietnam days. Drug and alcohol abuse programs were initiated. The Bicentennial allowed the Army to focus

on patriotic themes and many historical essays appeared in military journals to support the anniversary of American independence and the Army's role in it.

Military self-esteem returned. The revival of patriotism occasioned by the Bicentennial fed the Army's rejuvenation in spirit. The discrediting of the "immoral war" themes, as refuted by neo-conservative revisionists like Norman Podhoretz and Robert W. Tucker, paved the way for the Army's release from the stigma of being the symbol for everything done wrong in Vietnam. The seeming American helplessness during the Iranian hostage crisis and the invasion of Afghanistan heightened the attention of the American people on its military capabilities. The failure of the 1979 hostage rescue attempt focused public and congressional scrutiny on American military capabilities considered to have been neglected in the aftermath of Vietnam. Ronald Reagan swept into office and awarded the Pentagon with staggering growth rates.

The Army retained its inner focus due to the "defense dividend" produced by the Reagan years. A flurry of activity fielded the Abrams tank, Bradley fighting vehicle, and other new weapons systems. Moreover, the introspection continued into the mid-1980s as the Army's attention remained riveted on the change over to its "Division 86" blueprint conceived during the post-Vietnam

doctrinal revolution. As the basic unit structure and weapons systems in companies and battalions changed, new training and new evaluations consumed the Army's attention.

Therefore, in a very real sense, the doctrinal reorientation of the Army in the mid-1970s generated a self-perpetrating force which projected well into the mid to late-1980s. The preeminence of the European mission over all others retained a "lock" on the Army's attention span as new weapons systems and supporting revisions to doctrine "came on-line."

The Army's initiative with the "Light Division" also internalized the Army's attention as strategic mobility and force projection became the "buzzwords" of the mid-1980s. Searching appraisals on the Vietnam War just didn't fit into the scheme of things given the excitement and challenges derivative of emerging force structures and new equipment. However, post-Vietnam assessments were not entirely shelved.

### Search For Knowledge

Although the Army made its own formal inquest in the form of the BDM study, it was soon relegated to relative obscurity by the completion of Harry Summers' On Strategy at the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute as the 1980s began.



Even at its inception, Summers' thesis was something less than a comprehensive, exhaustive analysis. In the introduction to Summers' work, a former Commandant of the U.S. Army War College, Lieutenant General DeWitt C. Smith, Jr., wrote a rather tepid introduction that contrasted sharply with the raving reviews and government-wide distribution given it by the then U.S. Army Chief of Staff. In his introduction to the first edition of On Strategy, Smith described it as "one man's critical analysis" which became "somewhat controversial even before its publication." Its contents, he continued, "by no means represent the ultimate judgment, nor is it without flaws. But it exists...."28

As if these words inadequately conveyed the message, Smith left no doubt when he continued: "I have said that this book is not perfect or all inclusive and others will share that view.... It is very much one man's opinion.... Some may feel that it puts too much blame on political and social shortcomings, and not enough on the substantial faults which the war revealed within the armed forces themselves. Still others may find it unsubstantial, or unappreciative in dealing with counterinsurgency and the tactical war. And my special concern is that it seems not to stress enough the enormous force, depth, and consequence of the moral judgment which many good Americans made against

the war itself even when they were sensitive to the decency, valor and commitment of most who fought in Vietnam."<sup>29</sup>

Curiously missing from the pages of Summers' text was a description of North Vietnam's strategy played out against U.S. counter-strategies adopted to achieve U.S. objectives. For a work that purported to address strategic issues presented by the war, military readers would have to consult civilian authors, such as Douglas Pike or William Duiker, to gain an appreciation for how the American enemy thought in terms of specific strategies to achieve their goals. The Vietnamese strategic concept for struggle, or dau tranh, does not find its way onto the pages of On Strategy. Military readers, wanting to find out what strategy had beaten them in Vietnam, would find that a comprehensive answer eluded them in the pages of the Military Review from 1975 forward. If the military officer turned to the pages of Parameters, he would have to wait until the Autumn 1984 edition of Parameters to find Hung P. Nguyen's "Communist Offensive Strategy and the Defense of South Vietnam." Here for the first time in the pages of a widely read military journal he would find a discussion of the synthetic communist force strategy. Such expositions had escaped military writers for nine years in the pages of Army military journals. Major Robert Doughty's first Leavenworth Paper entitled The Evolution of U.S. Army

Tactical Doctrine (1979) contained passages that treated the synthetic nature of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. His research is currently required reading for CGSC students during the Vietnam lessons of the Combat Studies Institute's "Evolution of Modern Warfare" course. However, Doughty's exposition relates to the development to U.S. Army doctrine and does not provide a broad treatment of the various enemy strategies employed during the war. Although published in a military professional journal, it was a civilian author who sought to articulate enemy strategy so that American strategy could be critically assessed against it. Still absent was an assessment by a military author which would have complied with Clausewitz's dictum that, "In war, the will is directed at an animate object that reacts."<sup>30</sup>

The foregoing discussion does not suggest that, besides the BDM Study and the Strategic Studies Institute's sponsorship of On Strategy, nothing was done to critically look at the Vietnam War. Although the evidence is not clear from a reading of Military Review and Parameters, studies of various facets of the war were undertaken. A series of monographs by senior officers who had been in key positions during the Vietnam War, along with a series of studies by the U.S. Army Center of Military History, were completed. For example, two monographs published in 1975 were titled The Development and Training of the South Vietnamese Army.

1950-1975 and Allied Participation in Vietnam appeared.<sup>31</sup> One of the first historical studies by the U.S. Army Center of Military History, which examined U.S. policy and objectives over time in Vietnam, was completed in 1978 and called An Outline History of U.S. Policy Toward Vietnam, by Charles B. MacDonald. The Center of Military History initiated what it intended to be a comprehensive collection of historical studies of the U.S. Army in Vietnam during the late 1970s. The first installment on this project arrived in 1983 with Ronald H. Spector's Advice and Support: The Early Years, 1941-1960 which has been discussed earlier.

The next volume published in the Army's official history of its involvement arrived in 1988. It critiqued the U.S. role as advisor to the South Vietnamese government. Jeffrey J. Clark's Advice and Support: The Final Years focuses on the period of peak American involvement.<sup>32</sup> The crucial middle years volume has yet to be completed. Finally, the Command and General Staff College's 1985-1986 S.L.A. Marshall Lecture Series featured speakers on the low-intensity conflict theme. Guest lecturers included many Vietnam scholars who spoke on Vietnam and counterinsurgency, such as Douglas Pike and Bruce Palmer, Jr.

Despite what has been outlined above, the Army still falls well short of having produced a complete and comprehensive strategic assessment widely accepted within the

institution. If anything, the record suggests a widely disjointed effort with no single entity pulling together both the scholarship produced within and outside the Army. Even the strategic assessments produced to date have been submerged, as seems the case with the BDM Study, or disclaimed upon publication as with On Strategy. Mounting challenges to Summers' once popular strategic critique have largely gone unanswered. Worse, the readership survey indicates that the current generation of CGSC officers are unaware of the challenges made to Summers' thesis, yet reject it on some unknown basis. Only six officers out of a sample of 392 indicated reading Lawrence E. Grinter's and Peter M. Dunn's The American War in Vietnam which contains the essays by Peter M. Dunn and Noel Eggleston which provided some analysis to contradict On Strategy's thesis.

Within the Army school system a peculiar phenomenon takes place when Vietnam presents itself for study. In both the Army War College and the Command and General Staff College, officers have required readings that present the various schools of thought. In the case of the War College, groups argue the case for each school of thought against opposing schools of thought. At the Command and General Staff College, the various points of view are presented through the medium of George Herring's 1982 article in Military Affairs entitled "American Strategy in Vietnam: The

Postwar Debate." Discussion questions again play off the schools of thought against each other. However, the resulting analysis is very much open-ended and officers arrive at their own conclusions. No officially produced and sanctioned analysis is offered as a standard against which one can judge or integrate the divergent schools of thought explored. The discussion questions from the Command and General Staff College's syllabus ask officers to analyze strategies and attendant critiques offered by no less than six authors. Moreover, this is but one question of six to be answered during the course of a two hour class. A one-hour film preempts in-depth discussion on the readings from Douglas Pike which focus on enemy strategy and the concept of dau tranh. Such an approach tends to perpetuate a lack of focus and ability to arrive at a workable analytical architecture for strategically assessing the war.

### Resolution

It remains clear from the foregoing discussion that the Army undertook no additional institutional initiatives to reconcile the divergent critiques offered to strategically assess the Vietnam War. There has been no closure on a particular school of thought. Nor has there been any attempt to arrive at a synthesis of the scholarship presented to date. Serious Army attention and scholarship

devoted to North Vietnamese strategy is hard to come by. An institutionally adopted strategic critique which will guide the Army's successor generations to critically assess the postwar debate awaits publication. Challenges to Summers' On Strategy, sponsored and published by the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, remain unanswered by the Army. The absence of replies to challenges by civilian authors, in combination with the difficulty to discern the Army's "best thought" on Vietnam, betrays an intellectual dormancy on the strategic questions still left open after fifteen years.

This lack of closure manifests itself by several indicators. First the body of doctrine for those actions "short of war" remains relatively unwritten. The doctrinal derivatives of FM 100-20 have yet to arrive. Yet, the energy devoted to keep FM 100-5 doctrine flowing proceeds apace. Therefore, how the Army will "imaginatively apply general purpose forces to low-intensity conflict" remains very much open to question. Theoretically, the Army had a wealth of experience to draw upon in Vietnam to fire its imagination. However, if in fact purges did occur, then the well of imagination will be bone dry.

Second, the approach to Vietnam in the service schools evidences a decidedly open-ended quality. Students come in, do readings, discuss them, then depart to make

their own decisions. The most fundamental questions about the war, such as the type of war fought, remain largely undecided. If deciding on the type of war to be fought is the most important and comprehensive strategic question, then our future generals are in trouble. When asked to answer this question which Clausewitz ranked the most important, the range of answers is amazing. Besides being called a conventional war (1.5 percent) or revolutionary war (36 percent) future Army leaders also defined Vietnam as "a war of national liberation," "nationalistic," "low-intensity conflict," "a civil war," and finally "an insurgency which in my mind is different from revolutionary war." The striking aspect about this gamut of responses is that officers had just completed the instruction in the CGSC curriculum on "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency" that used Vietnam to support its instruction. That such a lack of precision reigns may be a function of the scant amount of hours (thirty-nine) devoted to the subject at the CGSC level. This absence of definition on the type of war contrasts sharply with the relative precision accorded FM 100-5 doctrinal terminology taught over 350 hours in the CGSC core curriculum. The divergence in clarity is appreciable.

Granted, dealing with strategic questions must involve flexibility in language for both concepts and



definitions. However, this differs from a relative absence of definition and agreed upon terminology which seems to be the case here. Also, the argument that Vietnam's divisiveness precludes any possibility of agreement again betrays a lack of American and Army focus on the phenomenon of revolutionary war which employs the instrumentalities of conventional war, insurgency, political organization, and terror to achieve its ends. It can take advantage of and harnesses pre-existing nationalistic and civil war causes to attain its ends of political power within states. Moreover, fifteen years have passed since the fall of Saigon. The Army must consciously decide what legacy it wants to leave to its heirs. Letting its officers read civilian writers and decide for themselves seems hardly an acceptable state of affairs for the institution charged to find imaginative ways to use general purpose forces in low-intensity conflict. To do so, the Army will need a vision for where it is going. Not knowing where it has been will cloud the overall picture for designing future strategies to conform with national policy.

#### **TRANSITION**

The post-Vietnam Army's odyssey to discover the Army's "conventional wisdom" on Vietnam has proven to be a

difficult journey. Confounded by the enormous amount of postwar revisionism, future generations of Army officers must find some analytical guidepost to critically sort out all the scholarship offered them. When they turn to their own institution for such guidance, the Army presents them with a warmed-over version of what the postwar revisionists have already written. The hard questions go unsettled. How Vietnam should or shouldn't relate to the current challenges facing the Army in low-intensity conflict does not surface. Sophisticated warnings about making false historical analogies prove useless when no commonly accepted strategic assessment exists to begin with. Then again, maybe this will prove to be a positive omen.

In fairness to the Army, this state of affairs reflects how American society, as a whole, continues to deal with its Vietnam experience. A decided, comfortable avoidance by the American public of how Vietnam now will affect us, gives substance to the old refrain that "an Army reflects the society it comes from." Both inside and outside the Army, to talk about Vietnam is much like discussing AIDS; it has been, and continues to be, a subject far too delicate, and something to which there is no known solution. In a way, the Army's conscious avoidance speaks to how deeply the war's trauma continues to be felt by those senior officers now leading the Army. They fought the war

at the platoon, company, and battalion level. They saw their profession almost destroyed by the war. To them fell the unenviable task of rebuilding a badly damaged Army. A professional contract of silence on Vietnam descended upon the Army during the mid-1970s, and endured well into the late 1980s. The military journals attest to the observance of silence on Vietnam. Only in January 1989 did the Military Review devote an edition to Vietnam. After Summers' condensed version of On Strategy appeared in a 1983 Parameters, civilian authors largely addressed Vietnam. Military officers' post-1983 contributions on Vietnam in Parameters could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

## CHAPTER 4

### ENDNOTES

- 1 U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 2 Unified Action Armed Forces (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1986), 2-1.
- 2 The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1986), 28.
- 3 The White House, National Security Strategy, 28.
- 4 Robert S. McNamara as quoted by Jonathon Alter in "McNamara Recalls Vietnam" Newsweek 103 (May 28, 1984), 31.
- 5 LTC Arthur S. Frame, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth: KS. These schools of thought or categories do not represent the formal position of the Combat Studies Institute or any other Command and General Staff College entity. LTC Frame uses these schools of thought to introduce his students to the Vietnam elective course taught at the Command and General Staff College. They represent a distillation of the Combat Studies Institute faculty's categorization of the literature and attitudes which have attempted to fix blame during the postwar debate.
- 6 John P. Lovell, "Vietnam and the U.S. Army: Learning to Cope with Failure," in Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam: Implications for American Policymaking (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), 130. William E. Depuy expressed this to James Lovell on 1 July 1985.
- 7 U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976), 1-2.
- 8 John P. Lovell, "Vietnam and the U.S. Army: Learning to Cope with Failure," in Democracy, Strategy, and Vietnam: Implications for American Policymaking by George K. Osborn and others (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), 131.
- 9 Lovell, "Vietnam and the U.S. Army," 131.
- 10 The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States, 28.

11 "CGSC AY 1991-92 Curriculum" 'The Emerging Vision' Briefing Papers and Slides of the Command and General Staff College on future CGSC curriculum design, 1990. A copy of the CGSC presentation was supplied by Dr. Steven Metz, Department of Joint and Combined Operations, Command and General Staff College. The basis for computing the new ratio was as follows:

<u>Prosecution in War</u>		<u>Short of War</u>
<u>Block I Courses</u>	<u>Block III Courses</u>	<u>Block IV Courses</u>
2 ALB Doctrine	4 TACAIR in NATO	4 LIC Fundamentals
4 Bde Opns/Spt	18 Sov Opn'l Art	5 Contingency Opns
28 Integ Arms/Svc	4 Comparison of	2 Counterinsurgency
73 Solve Tac Prob	Div/Corps Fight	2 Nation Building
4 Write Orders	40 Div Defense	
<u>Block IV Courses</u>	<u>Block V Courses</u>	<u>Block VI Courses</u>
33 Corps Cont Opns	29 Corps as ARFOR	33 LIC
<b>TOTALS:</b>		
144	95	
239		46

$$239/46 = 5.19$$

12 "CGSC AY 1991-92 Curriculum" 'The Emerging Vision' Briefing Papers and Slides of the Command and General Staff College on future CGSC curriculum design, 1990.

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15 Andrew J. Bacevich, "Disagreeable Work: Pacifying the Moros, 1903-1906," Military Review 67 (June 1982): 50.

16 Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army 2d ed. (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1984), 161.

17 Weigley, History of The United States Army, 161.

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- 21 Peter Maslowski, "American Values and Army Values," Military Review 70 (April 1990): 17.
- 22 John R. Galvin, "What's The Matter With Being A Strategist" Parameters: Journal of The U.S. Army War College 19 (March 1989): 7.
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- 27 David J. Baratto, "Special Forces in the 1980s," 5.
- 28 Summers, Jr., On Strategy, see introduction by LTG DeWitt Smith, Jr. The edition of On Strategy cited earlier in this thesis is the 1982 Carlisle Barracks edition with an introduction by General Merritt as described in Chapter Two.
- 29 Summers, Jr., On Strategy, see introduction by LTG DeWitt Smith, Jr.
- 30 Karl von Clausewitz, On War II:3 edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 149.
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## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### IN SEARCH OF AN ARMY ASSESSMENT

My investigation has searched in vain to find a pronouncement, document, or analysis that offers an approved "Army" strategic Vietnam assessment. This conclusion does not deny the existence of Harry G. Summers' On Strategy sponsored by the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College. Nor does this conclusion overlook the fact that under the leadership of a former U.S. Army War College Commandant, a "strategic lessons learned" study was under-taken and completed. Finally, this conclusion does not attempt to deny the efforts of the U.S. Army Center of Military History's efforts to complete a multi-volume history of the U.S. Army's involvement in Vietnam.

This conclusion does say that the Army's institutional behavior, with respect to the two strategic assessments, sends markedly contradictory and highly confusing signals that beg the question, "Where does the Army stand on Vietnam?"

General DeWitt Smith, U.S. Army War College Commandant, impressed with the insightful writings of Colonel Harry G. Summers, arranged for his assignment to the War College's Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) in the late 1970s.<sup>1</sup> Summers was to tap the BDM data for a book on Vietnam.<sup>2</sup> He turned to Clausewitz's On War as the theoretical framework for making a strategic assessment.<sup>3</sup>

#### **SUMMERS' ON STRATEGY--OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL?**

##### **No Matter--It's Not Adequate**

Although Summers' purpose at the Strategic Studies Institute was ostensibly to draw on the BDM data, the BDM findings never survived extant in the pages of On Strategy. A comparison of both works reveals them to be almost diametrically opposed. On Strategy relegated the BDM Study to obscurity. The BDM Study has disappeared from the Army's consciousness for all practical purposes. Six officers out of a sample of 392 surveyed indicated having read the BDM study (1.5 percent). On Strategy has been the most widely known assessment within the Army.<sup>4</sup> Since On Strategy has supplanted the BDM Study, my concluding analysis will briefly present a review appraisal of the adequacy and acceptability of Summers' thesis.



### Adequacy

The proposition that Vietnam was a conventional war conveniently dismisses the possibility of the operation and application of the revolutionary theory of war. Although acknowledged to exist by Summers, his patent rejection of Mao's revolutionary warfare theory is somewhat ahistorical and violates a key Clausewitzian idea. Clausewitz himself pointed to the significant differences between wars: "Every age has its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions."<sup>5</sup>

Summers also seems to gloss over the fact that revolutionary war uses conventional war as one of many instrumentalities in its repertoire. Among the other means available, it also employs political proselytization, assassination, terror, and guerrilla warfare. Accordingly, by deciding Vietnam to be conventional in nature, On Strategy casually dismisses the political dimension of revolutionary war where the primacy of the political struggle supersedes purely military confrontation. Mao's theory expressed this concept best when he told the Red Army to "fight not only for the sake of fighting, but in order to conduct propaganda among the masses, organize them, and help them establish revolutionary political power."<sup>6</sup> Therefore, by narrowly focusing on conventional war, Summers' analysis excludes the many other instrumentalities ("means") employed

by revolutionary war. Since they have been excluded, they do not receive the strategic attention and analysis required from which counterstrategies can be developed. Furthermore, the concentration on the conventional war theme narrows On Strategy's strategic assessment to the 1965-1973 period of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. U.S. efforts from 1950-1964 do not receive proportionate attention.

Moltke's generation of Prussian generals misunderstood Clausewitz when they arrived at the conclusion that the overriding aim in war should be the destruction of the enemy's armed forces. However, this misinterpretation may have found a new home in the post-Vietnam American Army. Unfortunately, if the enemy's strategy consciously aims at evading decisive engagement and destruction, it forces a fundamental reconsideration of the proposition that the Viet Cong or other future insurgencies merely supply a "strategic distraction." Hanoi's strategy viewed the Viet Cong, the North Vietnamese Army, and the South's rural population as collectively crucial to its success.<sup>7</sup> This multi-faceted enemy strategic orientation undercuts the universal applicability of a Clausewitzian analytical framework which sees the destruction of the enemy's army as the only strategic aim. Like the architects and implementers of the Schlieffen Plan, American officers tend to (mis)interpret Clausewitz by exclusively focusing on the destruction of

enemy military forces or warmaking capability as the only key enemy center of gravity. By extension, Summers' thesis also precludes the possibility of a "synthetic" force strategy where local and provincial guerrilla forces, in concert with North Vietnamese regular units, functioned in mutually supporting roles.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps On Strategy's most glaring omission stems from its full evasion of North Vietnamese strategy as stated in their own terms. The enemy's struggle concept and strategy called dau tranh does not find its way onto the pages of On Strategy. This seems strange given its predilection for a Clausewitzian analytical context. Clausewitz himself wrote that "in war, the will is directed at an animate object that reacts."<sup>9</sup> To construct an analysis that consciously excludes a focus on how your enemy will conduct himself in reaction to the expression of your will discounts strategy's interactive nature.

### Acceptability

Even at its inception, Summers' thesis was something less than a comprehensive, exhaustive analysis. In the introduction to Summers' first edition, Lieutenant General DeWitt C. Smith, Jr. described it as "one man's critical analysis" [emphasis added].<sup>10</sup> As if these words inadequately conveyed the message, Smith left no doubt when

he continued: "I have said that this book is not perfect or all inclusive and others will share that view.... *It is very much one man's opinion* [emphasis added]...."<sup>11</sup> Smith's extended comments in his introduction to Summers' first edition are not well known now as the years have passed. These words disclaim any acceptance of the strategic analysis by the power that brought Summers to the Strategic Studies Institute in the first place. Yet, in the very next year, the new War College President resurrected On Strategy's acceptability. General Smith's introductory remarks disappeared from On Strategy's second edition. As Major Dave Petraeus has observed, On Strategy then became something akin to the Army gospel on Vietnam. Summers' popularity with the Army also derives from a highly developed and effective writing style coupled with the principles-of-war framework adopted by On Strategy to analyze the Vietnam War. Both attributes account for its popularity in military circles.

Another measure of On Strategy's acceptability involves how the Army has embraced Summers' strategic assessment over time. On this score, the Army has sent very mixed signals. Although military schools once placed On Strategy on their required reading menus, it no longer dominates the lime-light. The U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) lists On Strategy as a "suggested"

reading for one of its Vietnam lessons. Although the Combat Studies Institute requires officers to read a shorter Summers' article (five and one-half pages), it in no way supplies the breadth of analysis found in On Strategy (121 pages).<sup>12</sup> Instead, CGSC requires both the reading and purchase of Andrew F. Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam which very much belongs to the counterinsurgency camp.<sup>13</sup>

If On Strategy once represented the Army's premier post-Vietnam strategic assessment, it now seems to be consciously ignored at the intermediate service school level. Finally, a recent survey of CGSC officers rejected Summers' "tactical victory, strategic defeat" thesis when asked to choose from among the competing schools of thought. However, on what analytical basis this rejection rested could not be determined from the data available.<sup>14</sup>

The Army's post-Vietnam strategic assessment, as embodied in Summers' On Strategy, fails both tests of adequacy and acceptability. The casual dismissal of guerrilla warfare and the Viet Cong denies the operation and application of revolutionary warfare. In so doing, On Strategy takes on an ahistorical quality that discards the theory, practice, and success of "people's war" in China and Vietnam. Moreover, it fails to recognize the powerful ability of revolutionary warfare to fuse theory and application. This practical fusion imbues revolutionary

warfare with the ability to generate formidable, flexible strategies that orient on constant adjustments to achieve success. Mao wrote, ".... military theories [should be put] to the test of our own experience, assimilating what is useful and adding specifically what is our own."<sup>15</sup>

On Strategy's acceptability within the Army remains very much open to debate. Disclaimed by a War College Commandant upon publication, then seized upon by the Army leadership, distributed to general officers and the White House, and finally relegated to second place in service school curricula, hardly speaks of a consistent policy of endorsement or approval. Nor does this treatment tend to support On Strategy's durability over time. No policy statement declares that On Strategy, the BDM Study, or any other school of thought bears the Army's *imprimatur* as the best available post-Vietnam strategic assessment.

#### CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, I must conclude that the Army has no institutionally accepted Vietnam strategic critique that adequately addresses the realities of revolutionary war as prosecuted by North Vietnam. Further, General Galvin's decade-old hope for an exhaustive analysis that will assist the Army to respond to low-intensity

conflict has failed to materialize. There are no Army answers to the questions posed at the beginning of this investigation. This state of affairs represents a somewhat ironic phenomenon. After Vietnam, the Army created a "state of the art" evaluation and feedback system to measure the competence of its tactical units (ARTEPs). The Center for Army Lessons Learned has recently sprung into existence. Yet acceptable feedback on the Army's strategy and role in "America's Longest War" still eludes adoption and consensus within the very institution charged with the prosecution of U.S. efforts in South Vietnam and future low-intensity conflicts.

Although the foregoing analysis and conclusion criticized On Strategy, one key point must be made: A serving military officer wrote On Strategy. For all of its shortcomings, it supplied a strategic analysis authored by an Army officer concerning the employment of military means to achieve national ends. Such strategic thinking had been largely absent from military scholarship after World War II. Several civilian strategists have pointed this out. Summers himself makes this point in On Strategy when he wrote that ".... we saw Vietnam as unique rather than in strategic context. This misperception grew out of our neglect of military strategy in the post-World War II nuclear era. Almost all of the professional literature on military

strategy was written by civilian analysts from the defense community."<sup>16</sup>

Bernard Brodie leveled a similar complaint against military professionals. In his seminal work on nuclear deterrence strategy entitled Strategy in the Missile Age his introductory chapter contains a subtitle heading called "The Traditional Military Depreciation of Strategy." Under this caption, Brodie spoke of civilian analysts who try to work with military men. Invariably, he wrote, these analysts encounter a barrier when trying to reach the military. This barrier exists, according to Brodie, because "implicit throughout the whole working structure and training program of the military system, [is the belief] that strategy poses no great problems which cannot be handled by the application of some well-known rules or 'principles,' and that compared with the complexity of tactical problems and the skills needed to deal with them, the whole field of strategy is relatively unimportant."<sup>17</sup>

The point being made here is that at least On Strategy fueled an interest in strategy within the Army and forced the discussion of strategic questions posed by the Vietnam War. However, since On Strategy's publication, civilian authors' challenges to the tenets of Summers' analysis have gone unanswered by the Army. Again, as Brodie noted as long ago as 1959, the Army retreated to a focus on



"tactical problems, and the skills needed to deal with them." This does not say that strategy is absent from FM 100-5 or FM 100-20 (Approved Final Draft). Definitions of strategy and its relation to the operational art and tactics appear in these manuals. However, these manuals represent untested intellectual constructs. A concrete example of revolutionary war strategy and its application exists for evaluation and study. Yet the Army, by not replying to the challenges to the strategic analysis written under the auspices of its War College's Strategic Studies Institute, has allowed its intellectual activity on Vietnam to lapse into an arrested state. A sense of lingering incompleteness and inadequacy restricts the Army and its future generations from dealing with the phenomenon of revolutionary war.

#### **IMPLICATIONS OF AN ABSENCE OF A STRATEGIC LEGACY**

##### **Lack of An Understanding of North Vietnamese Strategy, Revolutionary War Theory and Application**

The most significant consequence of an absence of an Army strategic assessment has been the unwillingness of serving military authors and strategists to devote serious scholarship to how the North Vietnamese took revolutionary war theory and applied it in practice. Civilian authors

such as William Duiker, Douglas Pike, and Douglas Blaufarb have supplied the description of enemy strategy absent from military journals. Still looming out there is Douglas Pike's startling assertion that *there is no proven counter-strategy to dau tranh*. Although Phillip Davidson's Vietnam at War also addresses the superiority of dau tranh, he offers no concrete counterstrategy.

Few American officers could provide a detailed, coherent description of how North Vietnam gave birth to the National Liberation Front (NLF). Also, how the NLF employed agitation-propaganda teams, political proselytization, and persuasion to generate Viet Cong cadres, which in turn carried out a political organization process at the village level, continues to escape the detailed professional attention given conventional warfare subjects.

Many officers on active duty would be hard pressed to fully explain how Ho Chi Minh and Giap adapted Mao's peasant-based strategy to the special needs and circumstances of Vietnam. Although Summers casually dismisses the Ho Chi Minh/Giap variant of Maoist strategy, North Vietnam eventually emerged triumphant after thirty years of war against two highly industrialized and militarily potent Western powers. The U.S. Army's preference for heavy forces which demand intense technical, tactical, and managerial resources often precludes the

possibility of any in-depth investigation into, and understanding by, serving officers of the North Vietnamese variant of "people's war." To demonstrate this point, ask any student at the Command and General Staff College to analyze his fellow student's organization of a mechanized brigade in the defense. Then compare the depth and breadth of that response to a second question which asks him to assess the relative role of communism to that of nationalism, culture, and peasant organization during the growth of the National Liberation Front. Experience is that the average officer will make some mileage on the first question. When confronted with the second question, there will be some fits and starts to get out of the starting blocks. Some will object to my comparison of a specific and generic subject. However, my purpose goes beyond the subject matter to the ability to critically assess the important variables in both situations. Both answers must form part of any officer's analytical repertoire which support his decision making ability to prosecute military actions for "prosecution in war" or "short of war." It is clear from the national military strategy that national policy makers have not made this an either/or choice for the future Army leader--he must do both.

Although there may be some truth to the statement that Vietnam's circumstances were unique and that the U.S.

will never face something quite the same, nevertheless, an understanding of North Vietnamese strategy still offers a rich first-hand experience in the application of revolutionary war. Samuel Huntington makes the point about Vietnam's uniqueness quite well. He wrote that Vietnam was a legacy of Western colonial rule. Vietnam was, in addition, the one European colony in which Communist groups established an early ascendancy in the nationalist movement. The struggle for independence led to a divided country, a sequence of events which seems unlikely to be duplicated in the future.<sup>18</sup> However, Huntington's statements assume an understanding of Vietnam's uniqueness derived from his own strategic assessment. We have seen evidence that "uniqueness" also characterizes the Army's view on Vietnam. However, "uniqueness" has come to mean "aberration" for the post-Vietnam military. This point of view certainly characterized General DePuy's attitudes about the war and warfighting in general. However, General DePuy's attitudes did not stray far from the historical trend the Army established after finishing other than conventional wars.

Vietnam, viewed as an "aberration," has taken root in the Army's doctrinal system during the fifteen years since the fall of Saigon. The Army exclusively focused on conventional type warfighting missions to the exclusion of all other types of conflict. If there is any lasting

testament that supports this statement, it is the current atrophied state of doctrinal development that characterizes the "flow-down" doctrine from FM 100-20. The Army's "best available thought" on insurgency, peace-keeping operations, terrorism, peacetime contingency operations, and for low-intensity conflict in general lacks the same vigorous and vibrant attention accorded to FM 100-5 and its derivatives.

In the place of searching appraisals by military officers on North Vietnamese strategy and U.S. counter-strategies (if there were any), much time is spent on the tactics and employment of Soviet and Warsaw Pact motorized rifle units and operational formations. Even the latter focus wouldn't be so bad if something more than a mere passing attention was afforded to the theory and practice of revolutionary war in Indochina from 1950-1975.

#### **Absence of An Army Strategic Assessment--An Army Touchstone**

Far surpassing doctrine in importance, the Army's "best available thought" must be directed at establishing its own strategic interpretation on the Vietnam War. Being content to let future generations read what civilian authors have written about the war without an Army "touchstone" strategic assessment falls well short of the Army's responsibility to its future. Some day, future Army leaders will have to make

decisions when Vietnam gets thrown in their faces. The press appears more than willing to do so, if not with a direct reference to a Vietnam "lesson," then with an indirect allusion to Vietnam's legacy by being able to claim "quick success" during on-going military operations. The Army's own analysis of appropriate Vietnam strategies must do more than simply adopt one of the prevailing schools of thought. Although Stanley Karnow has characterized the postwar debate as "autopsies [that] are academic exercises," the Army must get off its ass.

The Army shouldered the primary responsibility for security assistance, advisory, and South Vietnamese Army building efforts from 1950-1964. Moreover, it prosecuted ground combat operations from 1965 to 1973. Also, it provided resources to the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program from 1967 forward. Its own understanding of what went wrong in Vietnam will be crucial to meet its future responsibilities. Joint Chiefs of Staff Pub 2 charges the Army to train, equip, and prepare forces for "prosecution in war and short of war."<sup>20</sup> In a recent policy statement, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff wrote that low-intensity conflict is the security challenge most likely to demand a U.S. military response with little or no warning.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, as General Galvin's statement indicates, the Army's own assessment of Vietnam will have a

great deal of impact in shaping the success or failure of future Army responses to low-intensity military operations.<sup>22</sup>

Again, without an Army strategic assessment which accounts for what North Vietnamese strategy contributed to the theory and experience of war, future generations cannot even begin to get to a level of analysis that allows them to make crucial distinctions about lessons. We may read what Huntington and others say, but understanding them from the perspective of the military's role will be quite another matter. Some keystone Army assessment of Vietnam is sorely needed to boil down and interpret the postwar debate to a manageable level.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Complete An Updated Strategic Assessment**

The United States Army needs to revisit Vietnam from a strategic point of view. It must attempt to produce an institutionally acceptable assessment that will guide post-Vietnam generations in their critical analyses of the Vietnam War. This strategic reappraisal must bear the Army's stamp of approval. Further, this updated assessment must address the complexities in dealing with "lessons" of the past. It should draw on Ernest R. May's "Lessons" of

the Past and David H. Petraeus' Ph.D. dissertation entitled "The American Military and The Lessons of Vietnam."

However, the sophistication about the application of lessons offered by May's and Petraeus' analyses cannot be attained until one single Army treatise exists to reduce the prolific nature of postwar revisionism to a manageable level.

This assessment may have to be interim in nature given the continuing divisiveness over the war. Perhaps a way to circumvent a paralyzing division within the Army in the conduct of this reappraisal would be to have it conducted by the Army's post Vietnam generation. Military officers must conduct the reappraisal so as to exert control over the field of strategy and strategic assessments. This should not preclude the participation of civilian scholars from the Army community, but the effort must force serving Army officers to deal with the war's legacy.

The key objective in conducting the reappraisal would be to produce a single comprehensive treatise that will gain wide acceptance and high visibility within the Army. This does not mean that the concern for consensus should overrule penetrating analysis. However, to assure that the reappraisal effort will become accepted and used within the Army, the participation should be Army-wide. The U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute would lead the effort. The U.S. Command and General Staff



College, The U.S. Army Center of Military History, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and a representative of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations would form the list of key participants and contributors.

Related objectives of the strategic reappraisal will be two-fold. First, the Army will employ the reappraisal to make sense of the postwar debate for future Army generations. Recognizing the incredible amount of material published on the war, the Army must offer its own interpretive guide on the postwar debate that conforms with the fruits of its own reappraisal. The Army's critical assessment on the most prominent and influential books written on Vietnam is very much needed. This may be done by preparing an annex to the reappraisal that looks something like Chapter Two, but modified and updated accordingly.

Second, the reappraisal should develop and recommend a common teaching scenario on Vietnam for use in the Army school system. The common teaching scenario's core will be the strategic reappraisal itself. The Army's senior and intermediate service schools, branch schools, and Reserve Officer Training Corps would employ this common approach when teaching Vietnam. However, the common teaching scenario should not be so overbearing so as to preclude the creativity and contributions of those who must teach Vietnam. The most expeditious way to bring this common

teaching scenario on line would be to harness the U.S. Command and General Staff College School for Professional Development's Military History Instructor's Course.

Some key parameters must be adopted for the conduct of the strategic reappraisal. First, the Army must commit itself to having the strategic appraisal completed and accepted within the Army no later than 1995. 1995 represents a generation's worth of distance from the Vietnam War. Officers who came on active duty in 1975 will be eligible for retirement at the twenty-year mark. Here, the Army must make a conscious decision on what it intends to "will" to its future generations on Vietnam. It must decide what intellectual capital it will equip future generations with on its Vietnam experience. Reading civilian authors at the intermediate and senior service schools with open-ended discussions will not serve future Army leaders well. Nor will an institutionally imposed "solution" help future Army leaders to think. The Army must leave its own carefully constructed analytical framework to future generations--a framework that will stand the test of time.

Second, the durability of that analytical framework will in large part depend on the focus and analysis devoted to North Vietnamese strategy and its own peculiar variant in the application of revolutionary warfare theory. The analytical framework's strength will also depend on the

point of view adopted. I think that even Harry Summers would admit to the shortcomings of Karl von Clausewitz for analyzing the Vietnam War. Yet, there is much that Clausewitz has to offer to help us interpret.

But the writings of Mao and Giap equally supply theory and analysis for understanding the Vietnam War. The reappraisal should give full exposition to their ideas, and then critically assess their validity and success in light of what we now know about Vietnam. The reappraisal should consider the possibility that revolutionary warfare theory might supply a unifying context for the diametrically opposed arguments and interpretations offered by both Summers and Krepinevich. The North Vietnamese used both conventional instruments and population political organization "means" to achieve their ends in South Vietnam. Perhaps both Krepinevich's counterinsurgency and Summers' conventional means had to be employed in tandem over a period of time to counteract the flexible North Vietnamese strategy arrayed against American efforts.

Third, the strategic reappraisal must address the full spectrum of U.S. means employed over time in Vietnam from 1950 to 1975, and must resist the temptation to narrowly focus on the U.S. ground involvement from 1965-1973. These "means" must be assessed against the operative U.S. objectives in place at the time. Appendix 2 contains a

very short list of U.S. objectives over time in Indochina. These could be expanded upon and included as an appendix to the strategic reappraisal when published. Given the long duration of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, perhaps the objectives, strategies, and key events of the war could be depicted on a fold-out chart as an annex to the reappraisal. Similar fold-out charts have been produced to depict U.S. foreign policy and key events since World War II. The Combat Studies Institute produced something of this sort for its 1981-1982 course entitled "The U.S. Military Experience in the 20th Century" (P613). Even before the strategic reappraisal is finished, a fold-out chart on the 1950-1975 period on Vietnam would greatly assist Army students to take the complex nature of the Vietnam War and make order out of it by reducing it into a chronological framework. This could be used by both the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College's Combat Studies Institute, and Department of Joint and Combined Operations as well as other military schools for the purposes of "teaching" Vietnam.

Fourth, in relation to the U.S. objectives in Vietnam, some critical analysis must be addressed to the very attainability of those goals themselves. So far, only the 'no-win' school (largely civilian writers) has focused on this aspect of U.S. strategy in Vietnam. Since the military authors have tended in large part to belong to only

the conventional or counterinsurgent schools of thought, the analysis authored by military men has assumed the achievability of U.S. objectives in Vietnam. Perhaps one of the most valuable legacies of the war will be to discern what is achievable and what is not. Furthermore, how the military should participate in the framing of national objectives so as to make them attainable by the strategies developed will be of on-going relevance to future Army officers. This will entail some 20/20 hindsight not available in the 1950s or 1960s. But if this is recognized at the outset it still supplies something instructive for future Army leaders who must advise national policy makers. Army leaders must be able to assess the attainability of the goals selected. They must be within the reach of national military means.

#### **ON ARMY DOCTRINE**

The same type of attention and resources devoted to the development of FM 100-5 now needs to shift to effect the doctrinal "flow-down" from FM 100-20. One of the consciously adopted Army "legacies" of Vietnam established by my investigation has been the almost exclusive focus on the European battlefield since the fall of Saigon. With the President's National Security Strategy now calling for

"imaginative ways for general purpose forces to be applied to low-intensity conflict," peacekeeping operations, counterinsurgency, terrorism, and peacetime contingency operations doctrine must now receive the Army's "best available thought." This must be done to readdress the balance in Army doctrine skewed by the Army's desire to forget its Vietnam experience.

The Army doctrinal system must trace a clear lineage from JCS Publication 2 Unified Action Armed Forces which charges the Army to prepare, train and equip forces for "prosecution in war" and "short of war." Accordingly, FM 100-1 The Army must draw upon this language as the Army's capstone doctrinal manual and make clear that it addresses the "continuum of conflict" with two source manuals--FM 100-5 for "prosecution in war," and FM 100-20 for those military actions "short of war." FM 100-1 must clearly establish the companion nature of FM 100-5 and FM 100-20 so that the Army understands their equal status as source manuals which address separate, yet possibly over-lapping portions of the continuum of conflict. Perhaps a statement in the preface to FM 100-1 might read like the two following paragraphs.

The Army's warfighting capability contributes to the reduction of the risk of war through deterrence, and should deterrence fail, provides the means to achieve strategic aims in war. FM 100-5 is the Army's keystone warfighting

manual. It explains how the Army's forces plan and conduct campaigns, major operations, battles and engagements in conjunction with other services and allies. The operations described in FM 100-5 concentrate on an environment where the military is the primary instrument being used to directly achieve strategic aims.

FM 100-20 addresses military operations short of war in the low-intensity conflict environment where the contribution of military force to the achievement of the military aim is indirect; that is, military operations support nonmilitary actions which establish the conditions under which the strategic aim can be realized. The military element of power supports the employment of the other elements of national power (diplomatic, economic, informational, political) to achieve U.S. objectives. The achievement of strategic aims in this context can be characterized as military operations short of war.

#### **On Developing Intellectual Capital**

My investigation's most disturbing, unintended "discovery" related to the readings selected by CGSC-level officers to understand Vietnam at the strategic level. While partly the fault of the students, the Army as an institution bears a large proportion of the blame for not deciding what it thinks important for its future leaders to

read. Admonitions to "do professional reading" only go so far. There is a lot of good and bad scholarship out on the Vietnam War. Also, there appears to be no "enforcement" mechanism to see if CGSC students have complied with the professional reading program.

Just as the Army's personnel polices consciously attempt to develop an officer's full potential by a wide variety of experience in a career's worth of assignments (OPMS), a companion policy must address how to develop an officer intellectually over his time in service. The Army has an excellent school system. However, as General Galvin noted, the Army school system's responsibility to, and contact with, its graduates should not begin and end with an officer's in-residence attendance.

The idea of a professional reading program is an excellent starting point to developing the "intellectual capital" of serving officers. However, this program must be enforced to have some meaning. This should not be interpreted to mean that the Army must give objective tests to officers on every book on the reading list. However, when an Army school requires an officer to read a book, some type of analytical review must be completed to transform passive learning (reading) into an active engagement with the subject matter presented (writing). This review could consist of a short four-part essay which asks the officer to



identify the author, his purpose in writing, the historical or institutional context of his work, and finally, an exposition and assessment of the author's general and specific ideas presented in the work. How the author's ideas relate to other works, military history, strategy, and doctrine will force an officer to sharpen his intellectual acuity.

To truly equip serving officers with adequate intellectual capital, the required reading program must be extended beyond the doors of the military school system. The Army school system should design a professional reading program which covers the breadth of an officer's career. The reading program should be designed to give the officer corps a common intellectual framework to prepare him for military actions "prosecuted in war" and "short of war." The professional reading program should have five principal categories to develop Army officers intellectually: history of warfare or military institutions, theories of war, current doctrines, strategy, and policy.

When an officer leaves a branch (basic and advanced), or intermediate school, the time until attendance at the next level of schooling is pretty well known. For example, three years normally transpire between the branch basic and advanced courses. Five years minimum will normally occur between the advanced branch schools and the

intermediate level schooling (e.g. CGSC). As few as five years can occur between the intermediate and senior service schools. The selection to intermediate and senior service schools becomes progressively more selective. Few officers attend senior service schools, yet the grades for senior service college attendance (normally lieutenant colonel and full colonel) also form the bulk of the key action officers and planners on higher level staffs. Hence, the need to keep these officers intellectually engaged must be the object of any professional reading program.

During the interim between the differing levels of schools, the next higher level Army school can establish a professional reading program to give depth to its instruction and to fully develop an officer's intellectual and analytical capacities. If the Army school system requires one book (or a compilation of articles) per every two months, some eighteen books can be read before attending the advanced course, thirty books before intermediate level schooling, and another thirty before attending senior service college. The professional reading program can be tied into unit officer classes once a quarter to keep officers on track.

Such a program is not overly demanding and will allow "room" for the officer to read other professional topics of interest to him. This approach puts the Army in

charge of the officer's intellectual development over the course of his career. Some type of enforcement mechanism should be established to monitor compliance with the career reading program. This could be done on a corresponding studies basis where an Army service school's adjunct faculty reviews the analytical essays described above on a random basis. Also, units could be tied in with the program where one officer's class every four months is set aside to discuss a particular required book or series of articles. Unit commanders could certify in writing that his officers had met the requirements of the program as evidenced by his ability to discuss the issues. A proposed career program is provided at Appendix 3 as an example.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

I would recommend a continued investigation into the legacy of Vietnam by continuing to survey officers on how they stand on the schools of thought. Extend the survey to students attending the Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS3) as well as students at the War College. Refine the survey's questions to give a sharper picture on what basis officers have developed their judgments about Vietnam (or other issues). A close eye should be kept on what role the Army school system has had on developing their judgments. This information should be provided in the way

of feedback during their courses in history and counter-insurgency. It will at least make them aware of the many schools of thought and how their contemporaries view the war.

I recommend that before the strategic reappraisal on Vietnam is completed, the Army school system should consciously rethink how it wants to present Vietnam to Army officers. I recommend a hard focus on the strategic issues left open by the war. The U.S. Army War College's Vietnam Case Study approach forces students to read and defend a particular school of thought about Vietnam against their classmates. Since this confronts students with a "higher threat" than the mere reading of what other authors have to say, it may provide a powerful methodology for ferreting out and coming to terms with the war's more fundamental strategic issues.

Since the attention on Vietnam by military officers has largely been absent from the pages of professional military journals, I recommend that the Military Review dedicate an issue every eighteen months to Vietnam. The theme should be "The Army and Vietnam: Coming To Terms." The special edition on Vietnam should be announced well in advance and encourage submissions by serving military officers. At least half of those submissions should focus on strategic issues and how Vietnam's legacy directly or

indirectly relates to current Army doctrine and strategy for low-intensity conflict.

### **EPILOGUE**

The Army must revisit Vietnam from a strategic point of view for the purpose of leaving future Army generations with its own version of a "legacy." The time is fast approaching when officers with Vietnam experience will no longer be on active duty. The post-Vietnam generation of Army leadership rebuilt and resourced a now formidable force that exudes pride, self-confidence, and fields the most modern weapons known to man. With the Soviet threat now receding in Europe, the time has finally arrived to come to terms with Vietnam so that future generations of Army leaders will profit both from Vietnam and the hard work that has brought the Army to where it is today.

## CHAPTER 5

### ENDNOTES

- 1 John P. Lovell, "Vietnam and the U.S. Army: Learning To Cope With Failure," in Democracy, Strategy and Vietnam: Implications For American Policymaking (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), 136.
- 2 Lovell, "Vietnam and the U.S. Army," 136.
- 3 Lovell, "Vietnam and the U.S. Army," 136.
- 4 Cecil B. Currey, "Preparing For The Past" Military Review 69 (January 1989): 10. In a footnote to his Ph.D. dissertation, Major (P) David H. Petraeus, currently aide to Chief of Staff Carl E. Vuono, concluded that the writings of Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr. cannot be overstated. Parade magazine claimed in 1983 that "in military circles," Colonel Summers was the "man of the hour" (14 August 1983, p. 9). Petraeus noted that in some places Summers' book came to be regarded as gospel. Summers also played an important role in the writing of Field Manual 100-1, The Army, the service's capstone manual, in which Summers' concepts again found expression. Summers' influence did not cease with his retirement in 1985. He became senior military correspondent for U.S. News & World Report. Petraeus concluded his footnote by saying "to understand the conventional wisdom on Vietnam, one must understand the arguments of Harry Summers." See David Howell Petraeus "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam: A Study of Military Influence and the Use of Force in the Post-Vietnam Era," Ph.D. dissertation for the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, October 1987. A copy of Major (P) Petraeus' doctoral dissertation is available in CARL under call number 959.70431 P493a c1. The footnote referred to is #30, which appears on page 283-284 of the UMI Dissertation Information Service reprint.
- 5 Karl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 593, 607.
- 6 Mao TseTung, Selected Military Writings of Mao TseTung, 2d ed. CSI Reprint (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1972), 54.

- 7 John M. Gates, "Vietnam: The Debate Goes On," in Assessing The Vietnam War. Eds. Lloyd J. Matthews & Dale E. Brown (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1987), 46-49.
- 8 Hung P. Nguyen, "Communist Offensive Strategy and the Defense of South Vietnam," in Assessing the Vietnam War, 104.
- 9 Karl von Clausewitz, On War, 149.
- 10 Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, The Army War College, 1981), see introduction by LTG DeWitt Smith, Jr. The edition of On Strategy cited earlier is the 1982 Carlisle Barracks edition with an introduction by General Merritt as described in Chapter Two.
- 11 Harry G. Summers Jr., On Strategy (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, The Army War College, 1981), see introduction by LTG DeWitt Smith, Jr.
- 12 U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Evolution of Modern Warfare Syllabus for Academic Year 1989-1990 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1989), 75.
- 13 United States Army Command and General Staff College, Student Text 20-4 Professional Reading Program (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1989), 1-2.
- 14 Appendix 1 provides the survey data to support this assertion. Questions "T", "U", "V", and "W" support my statement. However, I am at a loss to find an analytical basis for why my classmates have rejected Summers' thesis. Although they cite Summers as the most influential book they have read on the Vietnam War (see question "P" results on both the "BEFORE" and "AFTER" survey responses), their overall reading habits reflect a penchant for individual accounts or war stories (see responses on separate sheet of paper responding to the "LIST BOOKS OR ARTICLES" open-ended question on page 5). Also notice the compliance with the Command and General Staff College's Professional Reading Program. Note that Andrew Krepinevich's The Army and Vietnam has been read by 104 of the 392 respondents. Yet when respondents cited the most influential work, Summers' On Strategy topped the list.
- 15 Mao TseTung, Selected Military Writings, 87.
- 16 Summers, On Strategy, 1.

- 17 Bernard Brodie, Strategy in The Missile Age (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 11.
- 18 Samuel P. Huntington, quoted in Military Intervention, Political Involvement and the Unlessons of Vietnam (Chicago: Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs), 1-2.
- 19 Stanley Karnow, Vietnam: A History (New York: Viking Press, 1983), 17.
- 20 U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 2 Unified Action Armed Forces (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1986), 2-1.
- 21 U.S. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Staff, The United States Army: A Strategic Force For The 1990s and Beyond (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1990), 9.
- 22 The White House recently published President Bush's National Security Strategy of the United States. Section VI of the President's strategy is entitled "Relating Means to Ends: Our Defense Agenda." Within this section, the National Security Strategy devotes an entire subsection to "Low-Intensity Conflict." This section makes it very clear that "American forces... must be capable of dealing effectively with the full range of threats, including insurgency and terrorism. Special Operations forces have particular capabilities in this environment but we will also pursue new and imaginative ways to apply flexible general purpose forces to these problems." (see The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States March 1990 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1990)).



**APPENDIX 1**

## LEGACY OF VIETNAM SURVEY

## BEFORE INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY

250 Surveys Distributed, 200 survey responses = 80%

**PURPOSE.** To assess what the current generation of CGSC level officers in the Army perceive to be the "lessons" or "legacy" of Vietnam.

Please indicate your response by placing an arabic number next to each lettered question. Some questions will have only one response while others will have more than one. Some of the possible responses under a particular question may ask you to fill in a blank in addition to placing a number to the left of the letter that identifies the question--please do so.

## EXAMPLE:

3 Q. Command and General Staff College for Academic Year 1989-1990 graduates:

1. June 1990
2. July 1990
3. Not soon enough
4. I don't know

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ABOVE EXAMPLE

200 A. Are you a veteran of Vietnam? (Select one)

11	1. Yes	5.5%
189	2. No	94.5%

200 B. If you answered Question "A" affirmatively, were you in a combat, combat support, or combat service support role during the war (Select one)

189	1. I answered Question "A" with a "NO".
8	2. Combat
2	3. Combat Support
0	4. Combat Service Support
1	5. Other _____.

GO TO NEXT PAGE

200 C. If you answered Question "A" affirmatively, were you an officer, warrant officer, or enlisted man during the Vietnam War? (Select One)

189	1.	I answered Question "A" with a "NO".
0	2.	Officer
3	3.	Warrant Officer
8	4.	Enlisted

200 D. What is your current rank? (Select one)

171	1.	Major	85.5%
23	2.	Captain	11.5%
3	3.	Lieutenant Colonel	1.5%
2	4.	Colonel	1%
	5.	Lieutenant Cdr	0.5%

200 E. What is your educational level? (Select one)

74	1.	College Degree (B.A. or B.S.)	37%
116	2.	Master's Degree (M.A. or M.S.)	58%
2	3.	Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.)	1%
7	4.	Specialty Degree (J.D., M.D., or D.D.S.)	3.5%
1	5.	No degree	0.5%
	6.	No response	0.5%

200 F. What is your branch? (Select one)

101	1.	IN, AR, AV, ADA, FA, EN, SF	50.5%
26	2.	SC, MI, MP	13%
38	3.	AG, QM, FC, TC, MSC, CM, OD	19%
6	4.	Specialty: JAGC, DC, MC, CHAPLAIN, ANC, VC, MSC	3%
11	5.	USAF: <u>pilot (5); navigator(1); SP(1)</u>	5.5%
2	6.	USN <u>line officer (2)</u>	1.0%
3	7.	USMC <u>pilot (1); blank (2)</u>	1.5%
13	8.	International Officer	6.5%

200 G. You came on active duty (Select one)

125	1.	after April 1975, no prior enlisted time	62.5%
23	2.	after April 1975, prior enlisted service	11.5%
25	3.	before April 1975, no prior enlisted time	12.5%
24	4.	before April 1975, no prior enlisted service	12%
3	5.	NO RESPONSE	1.5%

       H. What is your year group? (Select one)

5	1.	1973	2.5%	42	4.	1976	21%	18	7.	1979	9%
12	2.	1974	6.0%	52	5.	1977	26%				
32	3.	1975	16%	32	6.	1978	16%				

GO TO NEXT PAGE

Page 3

200 I. What is your parent service? (Select one)

171	1.	USA	85.5%	3	4.	USMC	1.5%
2	2.	USN	1.0%	13	5.	INTERNATIONAL OFF	6.5%
11	3.	USAF	5.5%				

QUESTIONS "J" THROUGH "O" ASK THAT YOU IDENTIFY THE BOOKS YOU HAVE READ ON VIETNAM. LIST THE NUMBER(S) OF THE BOOK(S) READ. IN EACH QUESTION SELECTION "5" WILL BE USED TO INDICATE THAT NONE OF THE BOOK CHOICES FOR THAT GROUP/ QUESTION HAVE BEEN READ. THERE WILL BE BLANK SPACES AT THE CONCLUSION OF QUESTION "O" FOR YOU TO LIST BOOKS NOT FOUND IN QUESTIONS "J" THROUGH "O"

\_\_\_\_\_ J. Select the number(s) corresponding to the books(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (select one or more than  
\_\_\_\_\_ one).

23	1.	William Westmoreland, <u>A Soldier Reports.</u>
47	2.	Andrew Krepinevich, <u>The Army and Vietnam.</u>
28	3.	Stanley Karnow, <u>Vietnam: A History.</u>
4	4.	Lloyd J. Matthews & Dale E. Brown, editors. <u>Assessing the Vietnam War.</u>
126	5.	I have read none of these books.

\_\_\_\_\_ K. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
\_\_\_\_\_ one).

3	1.	Robert E. Osgood, <u>Limited War Revisited.</u>
9	2.	Vo Nguyen Giap, <u>The Military Art of People's War.</u>
21	3.	Dave Richard Palmer, <u>The Summons of the Trumpet.</u>
3	4.	Sir Robert Thompson, <u>No Exit From Vietnam.</u>
173	5.	I have read none of these books.

GO TO NEXT PAGE

\_\_\_\_\_ L. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_\_ one).

- 11 1. George C. Herring, America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam 1950-1975.
- 4 2. Lawrence E. Grinter and Peter M. Dunn, editors. The American War in Vietnam: Lessons, Legacies, and Implications for Future Conflicts.
- 1 3. Stanley Hoffman, Primacy or World Order: American Foreign Policy Since the Cold War.
- 2 4. Van Tien Dung, Our Great Spring Victory: An Account of the Liberation of South Vietnam
- 182 5. I have read none of these books.

\_\_\_\_\_ M. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_\_ one).

- 5 1. U.S. Grant Sharp, Strategy For Defeat.
- 12 2. Guenter Lewy, America in Vietnam.
- 26 3. Michael McLearn, The Ten Thousand Day War, Vietnam
- 6 4. W. Scott Thompson and Donald D. Frizzell, editors The Lessons of Vietnam.
- 158 5. I have read none of these books.

\_\_\_\_\_ N. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_\_ one).

- 7 1. Douglas Pike, PAVN: The People's Army of Vietnam.
- 68 2. Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War.
- 9 3. Phillip Davidson, Vietnam At War.
- 3 4. John Schlight, editor. Second Indochina War Symposium: Papers and Commentary
- 127 5. I have read none of these books.

GO TO NEXT PAGE

\_\_\_\_\_ O. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_\_ one).

- 3 1. Robert J. O'Neill, General Giap: Politician and Strategist.  
 13 2. Bruce Palmer, Jr., The 25 Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam.  
 3 3. BDM Corporation, A Study of the Lessons Learned in Vietnam.  
 1 4. Stephen T. Hosmer, The Fall of South Vietnam: Statements by Vietnamese Civilian and Military Leaders  
 181 5. I have read none of these books.

LIST BOOKS OR ARTICLES HERE THAT YOU HAVE READ BUT WERE NOT INCLUDED ON THE ABOVE LIST. See pp. 255-7.

NO RESPONSE = 134 66 separate responses

1. Sheehan - Bright & Shining Lie (7); Platoon Ldr (7)  
 Fall - Street Without  
 2. Halberstam - Best & Brightest (6); Joy (6)  
 3. Clodfelter - Limits of Airpower - 4

\_\_\_\_\_ P. Of the authors and books listed on the previous  
 pages of the survey, which would you say has  
 See pp. significantly influenced your views on the  
 258-9 "lessons" or "legacy" of Vietnam? [List in order  
 of greatest (1) to least (3) influence].

- |     |  |                               |                               |
|-----|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|     | Harry G. Summers   | Andrew F. Krepinevich         | Karnow                        |
| 65  | 1. <u>On Strategy 31</u>   | <u>The Army and Vietnam 6</u> | <u>Vietnam</u>                |
|     | Krepinevich  | Summers                       | Dave Richard Palmer 6         |
| 41  | 2. <u>Army &amp; VN 7</u>  | <u>On Strategy 6</u>          | <u>Summons of the Trumpet</u> |
|     | Westmoreland   | McLear                        |                               |
| 21  | 3. <u>A Soldier Reports 1</u>  | <u>10.00 Day War 2</u>        |                               |
| 101 | 4. Books have not influenced my views. (Place "4" next<br>to the space to the left of the letter "P".) |                               |                               |
| 34  | 5. No response   |                               |                               |

GO TO NEXT PAGE

VIETNAM LESSONS SURVEY - 1990 - BEFORE (BLUE) - PAGE 5

FILL IN THE BLANK. LIST BOOKS OR ARTICLES HERE THAT YOU HAVE READ BUT WERE NOT INCLUDED ON THE ABOVE LIST

( ) indicates # of books read

1. indicates separate entry from one survey

- (1) 1. Street Without Joy
- (4) 2. Limits of Airpower, A View From the Rock, 5 Years To Freedom, When Hell Was in Session
- (1) 3. The Gallant Men, Papers, Military Review, Documentaries, Relative War Stories
- (3) 4. Le Temps Perdu - Trinquier, Hamlet Surveys in VN, Limits of Airpower
- (1) 5. A Bright Shining Lie (Neil Sheehan); Various articles by Leslie Gelb & George Herring
- (4) 6. About Face, Bright Shining Lie, Platoon Leader, Killing Zone
- (3) 7. Fields of Fire, 13th Valley, A Bright Shining Lie
- (1) 8. The Army and Vietnam - Krepinevich
- (1) 9. Vietnam Minefield Employment Survey
- (3) 10. Destroy Or Die (My Lai Massacre), Five Years to Freedom, Raid (Son Tay)
- (2) 11. TIME-LIFE - The Vietnam War, Team Yankee
- ( ) 12. You've missed a major source of the Vietnam War: Journals, numerous articles over the past 20 years That's been my source, i.e. National Review, Amer Spectator
- (1) 13. TET '68 by LTC Phan Van Son
- (1) 14. Neil Sheehan - A Bright Shining Lie
- (2) 15. Bright & Shining Lie, Battle for Khe Shan
- (1) 16. I refuse to read books about Vietnam Price of Power
- ( ) 17. Local Turkish Newspaper
- (3) 18. Platoon Leader, Our Own Worst Enemy, Dispatches
- (4) 19. The Two Vietnams by Bernard Fall, Self-Destruction by Cinnacinatus, A Distant Challenge, Vietnam: Three Battles by SLA Marshall
- (1) 20. Drew Middleton - Crossroads of Modern Warfare
- (1) 21. Mounted Operations in Vietnam - General Starry, numerous articles
- (1) 22. Devil's Guard
- (2) 23. TET! About Face
- (3) 24. Zalin Grant, Survivors, ? Chickenhawk, John J. Tolson Airmobility in Vietnam
- (3) 25. Thud Ridge, Going Downtown, The Limits of Airpower
- (1) 26. Bloods
- (2) 27. La Guerra de Vietnam (IO response)
- (2) 28. Fire In the Lake, Platoon Leader

- (2) 29. Soldier - Anthony Herbert, "Braudwener War" ???
- (3) 30. Vietnam Studies: Intelligence, Life Book Series on Vietnam; TET 68
- (2) 31. It seems I read one or two other "first person" accounts, but I can't recall title (It's been a few years)
- (3) 32. War Comes to An Loc, The Ravens, Deadly Paradigms
- (3) 33. Best & Brightest, Tank Sergeant, Mounted Combat in Vietnam
- (1) 34. Vann, Bright and Shining Lie
- (8) 35. Phil Caputo, A Rumor of War; Boston Pub Co, Vietnam Experience series, Shelby Stanton, The Rise and Fall of An American Army, Robert Pisor, The End of The Line; Neil Sheehan - A Bright and Shining Lie; Jean Larteguy, The Centurians; Del Vecchio 13th Valley
- (2) 36. USAF Monologue II - Tale of 2 Bridges - Air War Over Vietnam
- (3) 37. My Lai Massacre & Cover Up; Crime of Silence; One Morning In the War
- (3) 38. TET '68, Air Base Defense in RVN 1961-73 by Fox, Air Base Defense by John F. Kreis
- (2) 39. Hamburger Hill, Platoon Leader
- (3) 40. The Best and the Brightest - Halberstam; One Very Hot Day; Numerous Personal Accounts
- (1) 41. Adios A Saigon - Jean Larteguy
- (9) 42. John Paul Vann & Bright And Shining Lie; Limits of Airpower (Clodfelter), Best & Brightest; Peace Is Not at Hand (Thompson), Rumor of War (Caputo), Street Without Joy (Fall); Chickenhawk; Flight of The Intruder, Tunnels of Cu Chi
- (2) 43. Chickenhawk, Platoon Leader
- (2) 44. Fields of Fire - Webb; Thirteenth Valley - Delvecio
- (3) 45. Fields Of Fire, Charlie Mike, Ambush
- (4) 46. Pentagon Papers, Street Without Joy, Dien Bien Phu, Numerous Novels, Thesis and Books, Non fiction paper
- (1) 47. Book IAW Traduction of Mao strategy in the courses taught in our national staff college
- (5) 48. Halberstam - Best & Brightest, Betts & Gelb The Irony of Vietnam, Sheehan - Bright & Shining Lie; Fall - Street Without Joy, McDonough Platoon Ldr.
- (2) 49. Secret Armies - Adams; Delta Force/Beckwith; various magazine articles
- (1) 50. Vo Nyuen Giap book - can't recall title
- ( ) 51. Dutch articles in Elsevier (Something like TIME)
- (1) 52. Best and the Brightest
- (1) 53. Flight of The Intruder - Coonts
- (4) 54. Aftermath: Frederick Downs, Jr; Nam - Mark Baker, The Raid - Benjamin Schummer, Armored Combat in VN
- (3) 55. Ambush and Bird - SLA Marshall; West To Cambodia,



- and The Fields of Bamboo - SLA Marshall
- (1) 56. Can't remember name, was novel by future SecNav
  - ( ) 57. Can't remember their titles
  - (10) 58. Airmobility in VN - Tolson; Armored Combat in VN - Starry; Fire in the Lake - Fitzgerald; Hell in A Very Small Place by Fall; Soldier - Herbert; The Raid by S. Chemme, Ambush & Bird - SLA Marshall, Small Unit Action in VN, Banner of People's War - Giap, Street w/o Joy
  - ( ) 59. Have read extensively on media-military relations during and after VN
  - (1) 60. Platoon Leader - McDonough
  - (1) 61. Rumor of War Caputo
  - (9) 62. Street Without Joy and Hell in A Very Small Place - Fall; Infantry in VN; Distant Challenge - Garland; Brennan's War; Once A Warrior King; Ambush & Bird, West To Cambodia, Fields of Bamboo
  - (1) 63. Don't remember author or title: Subj: Indicted Leadership in VN. Some other 1st person fictional accounts, e.g. rotation of officers, various art
  - (1) 64. In Love and War - Stockdale
  - (1) 65. When Hell Was in Session
  - ( ) 66. Army Magazine Articles, AUSA reports, AUSA greenbook TIME, NEWSWEEK

QUESTION P. Of the authors and books listed on the previous pages of the survey, which would you say has significantly influenced your views on the "lessons" or "legacy" of Vietnam? LIST IN ORDER OF GREATEST (1) TO LEAST INFLUENCE (3).

LISTED ON # 1 LINE (Greatest Influence) - Top Entries

# OF  
ENTRIES TOTAL ENTRIES = 65

- (31) 1. Harry G. Summers, On Strategy, "Summers," or "On Strategy"
- (6) 2. Andrew F. Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam or "Krepinevich," or "Army & VN"
- (4) 3. Stanley Karnow, Vietnam: A History or "Karnow" or "Vietnam: A History"
- (3) 4. Halberstam, Best and The Brightest or "Halberstam" or "Best and the Brightest"
- (2) 5. Sheehan, Bright and Shining Lie
- (2) 6. Oberdorfer, Tet or "TET"
- (2) 7. McLear, 10,000 Day War or "McLear"
- (1) 8. Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports
- (1) 9. Palmer, Summons of The Trumpet
- (1) 10. Tolson, Air Mobility in Vietnam
- (1) 11. Hamlet Survey
- (1) 12. Starry, Mounted Ops in Vietnam
- (1) 13. Going Downtown
- (1) 14. USAF Monologue
- (1) 15. My Lai Massacre & Cover-Up
- (1) 16. Lewy, America in Vietnam
- (1) 17. Pike, PAVN
- (1) 18. Fitzgerald, Fire In The Lake
- (1) 19. Fall, Hell In A Very Small Place & Street Without Joy
- (1) 20. Adams, Secret Armies
- (1) 21. Books I have read during the course
- (1) 22. George Herring, America's Longest War

LISTED ON LINE 2 (2d Greatest Influence) 41 Responses

- (7) 1. Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam
- (6) 2. Palmer, Summons of The Trumpet
- (6) 3. Summers, On Strategy
- (5) 4. Mc Lear 10,000 Day War
- (3) 5. Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports
- (2) 6. Karnow, Vietnam: A History
- (1) 7. U.S. Grant Sharp, A Strategy For Defeat
- (1) 8. Bruce Palmer, 25-Year War
- (1) 9. BDM, A Study of The Lessons Learned
- (1) 10. Matthews & Brown, Assessing The Vietnam War

- (1) 11. Clodfelter, Limits of Airpower
- (1) 12. Lewy, America in Vietnam
- (1) 13. Herring, America's Longest War.
- (1) 14. Betts
- (1) 15. Infantry in VN
- (1) 16. Ambush

**THIRD GREATEST INFLUENCE - 21 Responses**

- (3) 1. Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports
- (2) 2. Sheehan, A Bright Shining Lie
- (2) 3. McLear, 10,000 Day War
- (2) 4. Lewy, America In Vietnam
- (1) 5. Summers, On Strategy
- (1) 6. Krepinevich, The Army & Vietnam
- (1) 7. O'Neill, General Giap
- (1) 8. Karnow, Vietnam: A History
- (1) 9. Palmer. 25-Year War
- (1) 10. Air Base Defense in VN
- (1) 11. Herring
- (1) 12. Crime of Silence
- (1) 13. Clodfelter, Limits of Airpower
- (1) 14. FitzGerald, Fire in the Lake & Platoon Leader
- (1) 15. Thompson, No Exit From Vietnam
- (1) 16. Stuart Herrington

\_\_\_\_\_ Q. Of the authors and works listed in questions "J" through "P" above that you indicated as having read, where did you read them and reflect upon the "lessons" of Vietnam? (Select one or more).

- 10 1. Officer Basic or Officer Advanced Course.
- 15 2. CGSC Core Curriculum Course (e.g. P511, P118).
- 11 3. CGSC Elective Curriculum (e.g. A694, P558).
- 98 4. Personal initiative for own professional development.
- 19 5. In units (e.g. at officer classes).
- 6 6. Graduate school: discipline: 2 7. CAS3

\_\_\_\_\_ R. What other sources would you say have significantly influenced your views on Vietnam? If you answer this question with a "3" or "4" response, fill in the blank next to the choice. (Select one or more). See page 261 for responses

- 83 1. Senior officers
- 28 2. Mentor
- 78 3. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 26 4. professional military education: what school and course: \_\_\_\_\_
- 36 5. none. 4 6. Blank

\_\_\_\_\_ S. If you answered question R with a 1, 2, 3, or 4 response, did these other sources influence you more than books? (Select one)

- 120 1. Yes 60%
- 36 2. No 18%
- 8 3. I answered the previous question with a "5". 4%
- 4. Left blank 4%

GO TO NEXT PAGE

QUESTION "R" Response 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Fill in the blank

45 responses

- (13) 1. Media - TV - News Media - Newspaper -  
New Coverage in 60s - news analysis
- (10) 2. Father - father-friends - my wife & VN in-laws  
relative - first hand account from relative
- (7) 3. Documentaries - PBS - CBS Video film series  
documentaries & movies
- (3) 4. Civ Grad Schools
- (3) 5. SF NCOs, NCOs
- (2) 6. Personal Experience
- (1) 7. Vets
- (1) 8. Col Stuart Herrington
- (1) 9. Mil Review and Army Magazine
- (1) 10. Movies (Full Metal Jacket, Platoon, Co C)
- (1) 11. Reading
- (1) 12. Summers' lecture
- (1) 13. Fellow officers

QUESTION "R" QUESTION R RESPONSE #4 Fill in Blank

- 1. CGSC...
- 2. CGSC (no course listed)
- 3. MS 101 West Point (instructor)
- 4. SFOQC
- 5. USMA/Military art (history)
- 6. BCT, AIT, OBC, OAC
- 7. CGSC - Issues in Intelligence
- 8. EOAC, CGSC
- 9. CGSC - A695
- 10. USAF-SOS
- 11. On desires
- 12. USAF SOS
- 13. CGSC USAR

\_\_\_\_\_ T. Which statement below comes closest to characterizing your overall views on the "lessons" of Vietnam? (Select one)

- 20 1. Tactical victory, strategic defeat. The U.S. Army won every battle yet failed to recognize that the true enemy center of gravity was the regular North Vietnamese Army. This North Vietnamese Army eventually led a 22 division assault into South Vietnam in 1975 winning the war.  
9.66%
- 111 2. The U.S. adopted a conventional, big-unit strategy based on traditional tactical unit operations and firepower that didn't fit the realities of insurgent or revolutionary warfare. By failing to both properly address, and adequately resource the population security and pacification dimensions of the war, the U.S. ignored the political, economic, and social aspects of the struggle.  
53.6%
- 32 3. The press, Congress, and the civilian leadership of the nation caused the U.S. failure to achieve its objectives in South Vietnam. The press turned a communist defeat during TET (1968) into a strategic victory for the North Vietnamese. The Congress cut both funds and military support (e.g. air cover) off to South Vietnam in the crucial 1972-1975 time frame, sealing the doom of South Vietnam. The civilian leadership, in failing to call up the reserves or remain committed to the war effort, assured victory for North Vietnam.  
15.4%
- 30 4. The application of U.S. power, military or otherwise (e.g. diplomatic, economic, informational), would never have produced victory in Vietnam regardless of whatever strategy was adopted. Vietnam was inherently beyond the pale of U.S. salvation due to its fractured society, nascent democratic institutions, inept and corrupt leadership, and mandarin-type government by Diem and his followers.  
14.4%

1 5. Other 0.5% 10 6. No response/left blank 5.0%  
3 7. More than one response  
GO TO NEXT PAGE

\_\_\_\_\_ U. You view Vietnam as: (Select one) (If you mark response "4" please place a "4" next to the letter "U" and fill in the blank).

- |             |    |  |       |
|-------------|----|--|-------|
| 5           | 1. | a conventional war                                     | 2.5%  |
| 64          | 2. | a revolutionary war                                    | 32.0% |
| 95<br>47.5% | 3. | an all new type of war which combined both a & b       |       |
| 27          | 4. | Your own formulation: <u>page 265 for 27 responses</u> |       |
| 7           | 5. | Left blank   | 3.5%  |

\_\_\_\_\_ V. You believe that a U.S. ground invasion of North Vietnam: (Select one)

- |            |    |   |
|------------|----|---|
| 24<br>12%  | 1. | would have carried the war to the enemy's homeland and destroyed his center of gravity--the North Vietnamese Army--ultimately resulting in the defeat of North Vietnam.   |
| 44<br>22%  | 2. | would not have worked. The North Vietnamese would have shifted their center of gravity, denying set piece battles to the Americans as they had the French, sought sanctuary in China, and invited the Americans to attempt to seal the North Vietnamese-Chinese border while they infiltrated and launched attacks back into Vietnam. |
| 126<br>63% | 3. | would have been politically and militarily impossible to do. A ground invasion would have cost the United States too much in terms of an effort which would essentially require the outright occupation of North Vietnam itself, something beyond U.S. military capabilities and U.S. political will at anytime during the war.       |
| 8          | 4. | Left blank 4%   |

GO TO NEXT PAGE QUESTION "U" You View Vietnam as:  
Your Own formulation \_\_\_\_

1. A conventional revolutionary war (not a new type) w/o U.S. strategic goals for little people
2. An extracted, never-ending struggle
3. A war of national liberation/unification
4. A "COIN" strategy with limited war scenario
5. political
6. War of succession from French & U.S. colonial rule
7. insurgency based on ideological struggle
8. unconventional/political war
9. insurgency/civil war
10. classical insurgency prosecuted on MAD model
11. reactionary
12. 1 + 2 but not a "new" type of war
13. A war of reunification with aspects of revolution in the south by insurgents and conventional warfare by the north
14. A civil war and a proxy battle for superpowers
15. US use of military force to support an inept/corrupt regime; no real strategic objective
16. unconventional
17. insurgency
18. we fought a conventional war; they fought an insurgency combined with covert war
19. a revolutionary war that we escalated into a mid-intensity conflict then quit (after wasting a lot of assets, especially lives)
20. a revolutionary war coopted by NVN expansionist ambitions
21. Combination - there was an insurgency both popularly based and outside supported - there were also conventional threat forces with conventional military organizations and obj's rot within, chainsaw the outside
22. an insurgency that failed, a conventional war that did not
23. war of national liberation
24. war of national liberation
25. it was a combination of 1+2 but it was not a new type of war
26. an insurgency that U.S. escalated to a conventional war
27. wrong war at wrong time; should never have escalated to involvement of U.S. ground troops.



- \_\_\_\_\_ W. Which of the following statements would come closest to characterizing your views of the 1968 TET offensive? (Select one)
- 21  
10.5%

1. The U.S. Army decimated the ranks of the Viet Cong in the 1968 Communist TET Offensive. This essentially destroyed the smoke screen of a guerrilla war as the means by which the communists would achieve victory.
  - 119  
59.5%

2. The argument about the Viet Cong demise in 1968 is irrelevant. The North Vietnamese never claimed the Viet Cong would win on their own. To focus solely on the Viet Cong's 1968 decimation ignores the North Vietnamese's strategy of synthesizing local, main, and regular forces in pursuit of a long standing political objective--the reunification of all Vietnam under Hanoi.
  - 55  
27.5%

3. Don't know enough about TET or the Viet Cong to have an opinion.
  - 5

4. Left blank 2.5%

GO TO NEXT PAGE

- \_\_\_\_\_ X. Which of the following statements comes closest to characterizing your views on why the ROLLING THUNDER bombing missions over North Vietnam (March 1965 - October 1968) failed to achieve U.S. objectives? (Select one)
- 48 1. U.S. civilian leaders placed too many restrictions  
22.64% on targets, weapons, and number of sorties flown.  
These restrictions hamstrung the effectiveness of the bombing campaign.
- 35 2. ROLLING THUNDER proceeded from a fundamentally  
16.5% flawed strategy because the U.S. tried to employ conventional air power on North Vietnam to produce effects on the war in the South. Bombing North Vietnam's rudimentary industrial base and primitive transportation system would never have produced any tangible effects.
- 26 3. Enemy determination was not factored in when  
12.5% considering the effects of bombing. In a culture accustomed to overcoming adversity he quickly reconstructed bridges, filled bomb craters. With little to bomb, the employment of U.S. military means in this fashion would have yielded only minor returns at the margin.
- 30 4. As a practical strategy the bombings actually  
14.5% backfired. American strategists thought that the bombings would raise the threshold of pain, eventually forcing the Vietnamese to capitulate. It did just the opposite. It reinforced North Vietnam's claim to be the legitimate heirs of Vietnamese nationalism while simultaneously undercutting the legitimacy of the South Vietnamese government.
- 61 5. Don't know enough about ROLLING THUNDER to have  
30.5% an opinion.
- 5 6. No response 2.35% 7. Checked more 1 response

GO TO NEXT PAGE

- Y. Which of the following statements comes closest to characterizing your views on the effectiveness of the Christmas 1972 bombings (LINEBACKER II) on bringing the North Vietnamese back to the Geneva talks?
- 25 1. The bombing brought the North Vietnamese back to  
12.5% the peace talks in January 1973. This allowed the U.S. to end the war, and to get its POWs back.
- 60 2. The question poses a false measure of effective-  
30% ness. The bombings created a false illusion of victory by bringing the North Vietnamese back to the conference table. In 1965, American demands had been that North Vietnam withdraw all of its troops from the South. In 1973, no such condition was part of the final peace accords.
- 110 3. Don't know enough about the December 1972  
55% LINEBACKER II bombing campaign to have a definite opinion.
- 5 4. Left blank 2.4%
- Z. Given your assessment of the current world situation (especially the revolutionary events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union--while also keeping an eye on what is going on in Africa, the Middle East, and South America), do you think what happened to the U.S. military in Vietnam is:
- 155 1. relevant 82.5%
- 24 2. not relevant 12.0%
- 11 3. left blank 5.5%

GO TO NEXT PAGE

\_\_\_\_ **AA. Do you feel that Vietnam's legacy would play a role in, or influence, your decision-making as you advance to more senior positions of leadership in the USA/USN/USMC/USAF or your own service in your country? (Select one)**

1  
.4% 1. NO. Vietnam has no relevancy for the future. Vietnam's circumstances were so unique that we won't see anything like it ever again. The post-containment world will reinforce Vietnam's irrelevancy.

115  
56.9% 2. YES. With the Soviet threat now diminishing, U.S. attention will now shift, focusing more on Third World military challenges, thus making Vietnam relevant. Our experience in Vietnam will have some degree of relevancy when constructing national strategies to deal with revolutionary or insurgent challenges to U.S. interests in the Third World.

74  
37% 3. MIXED BAG. Vietnam will have some degree of influence no matter what. You see it get cited in policy debates constantly, as when military assistance for El Salvador comes up or when the U.S. contemplates intervention somewhere in the world. However, despite this type of influence, it isn't pervasive.

4  
2% 4. Vietnam shouldn't be allowed to have any influence. Any "lesson" drawn from the past for the purpose of application to the present should be highly suspect and highly contingent upon the precise circumstances of the situation at hand.

\_\_\_\_ **AB. In your opinion, who was the most formidable enemy the U.S. faced during the 20th Century? (Select one)**

41	1. The armies of Nazi Germany (1941-1945)	20.5%
23	2. The armies of Imperial Japan (1941-1945)	11.5%
6	3. The North Korean Army (1950-1953)	3.0%
5	4. The Viet Cong (1960-1968)	2.5%
2	5. The North Vietnamese Army (1965-1972)	1%
31	6. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army	15.5%
79	7. The Soviet/Warsaw Pact Armies (1949-present)	39.5%

GO TO NEXT PAGE

- AC. Which statement below comes closest to describing your professional judgment about the U.S. Army's doctrinal ability to address the entire spectrum of conflict as expressed in FM 100-5?
1. FM 100-5, the Army's capstone doctrinal manual, is currently adequate and provides a unifying concept for how the U.S. Army must deal with future conflicts. FM 100-5 adequately covers the full spectrum of warfare from low-intensity conflict through middle-intensity conflict to high-intensity conflict. Specific doctrinal guidance for the conduct of low-intensity conflict is properly located in a separate field manual (FM 100-20).  
34  
17%
  2. FM 100-5 does not adequately address the entire spectrum of warfare and focuses heavily on the middle to high-intensity conflict expected on the central European plain. FM 100-5, in its current form, does not adequately cover the more probable low-intensity conflict threats to U.S. national interests. Separation of warfighting doctrine between FM 100-5 and FM 100-20 (Low-Intensity Conflict) has a tendency to artificially divide the warfighting spectrum.  
145  
72.5%
  3. I have no opinion about FM 100-5. 8%  
16
  4. Left blank 2.5%  
5

GO TO NEXT PAGE

PLEASE REFER BACK TO YOUR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS "T" THROUGH "AC" WHEN ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS.

AD. Have you had a recent significant change in attitude or opinion in relation to any of the responses you indicated for questions "T" through "AC"?

32	1. Yes	16%		
158	2. No	79%	10	3. Blank 5%

AE. If you answered question "AD" affirmatively, please indicate the source to which you attribute your change in attitude or views. If you choose responses "1" or "2" fill in the blank below in addition to entering the number next to the space to the left of the letters "AE".

		P511 (11), P157 (5) P118 (3)
18	1. CGSC Course: (Indicate course #)	P552 (3) A695(2)
6	2. Other source: <u>world events, events in eastern Europe, thought, previous duty assignment</u>	
6	3. Own reading or research outside of CGSC course work.	
4	4. Discussions with CGSC classmates outside of CGSC course work.	
158	5. I have had no significant change in attitude (I checked the previous question "AD" as "NO").	
8	6. Left blank	

CEASE WORK AND RETURN THE SURVEY AS PER INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED TO YOU IN CLASS. CHECK TO ASSURE THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED ALL YOUR RESPONSES.

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your participation and support.

**LEGACY OF VIETNAM SURVEY**

**AFTER SURVEY RESULTS: 250 Distributed/198 Responses =  
76.8% response**

**PURPOSE.** To assess what the current generation of CGSC level officers in the Army perceive to be the "lessons" or "legacy" of Vietnam.

Please indicate your response by placing an arabic number next to each lettered question. Some questions will have only one response while others will have more than one. Some of the possible responses under a particular question may ask you to fill in a blank in addition to placing a number to the left of the letter that identifies the question--please do so.

**EXAMPLE:**

3 Q. Command and General Staff College for Academic Year 1989-1990 graduates:

1. June 1990
2. July 1990
3. Not soon enough
4. I don't know

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ABOVE EXAMPLE

192 A. Are you a veteran of Vietnam? (Select one)

8/4.1% 1. Yes  
184/95.8% 2. No

8 B. If you answered Question "A" affirmatively, were you in a combat, combat support, or combat service support role during the war (Select one)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|   | 1. I answered Question "A" with a "NO".   |
| 5 | 2. Combat                                 |
|   | 3. Combat Support                         |
| 2 | 4. Combat Service Support                 |
| 1 | 5. Other: <u>Marine Hospital Corpsman</u> |

GO TO NEXT PAGE

**192 C. If you answered Question "A" affirmatively, were you an officer, warrant officer, or enlisted man during the Vietnam War? (Select One)**

184 1. I answered Question "A" with a "NO".  
 2 2. Officer  
 1 3. Warrant Officer  
 5 4. Enlisted

**192 D. What is your current rank? (Select one)**

151 1. Major (78.64%)  
 32 2. Captain (16.66%)  
 7 3. Lieutenant Colonel ( 3.64%)  
 0 4. Colonel ( 0.00%)  
 1 5. Lieutenant Commander ( 0.52%)

**192 E. What is your educational level? (Select one)**

81 1. College Degree (B.A. or B.S.) 42.18%  
 101 2. Master's Degree (M.A. or M.S.) 52.6%  
 0 3. Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) 0%  
 5 4. Specialty Degree (J.D., M.D., or D.D.S.) 2.6%  
 4 5. No degree 2.08% 6. No response = 1 0.52%

**192 F. What is your branch? (Select one)**

103 1. IN, AR, AV, ADA, FA, EN, SF 53.64%  
 24 2. SC, MI, MP 12.5%  
 35 3. AG, QM, FC, TC, MSC, CM, OD 18.22%  
 6 4. Specialty: JAGC, DC, MC, CHAPLAIN, ANC, VC, MSC 3%  
 10 5. USAF: pilot (6); maint (1); blank (3). 5.2%  
 2 6. USN: aviation (2) 1.04%  
 2 7. USMC: field arty (1); blank (1) 1.04%  
 9 8. International Officer (Q "I" shows 13 IOs) 4.68%

**192 G. You came on active duty (Select one)**

3 left blank 1.56%  
 123 1. after April 1975, no prior enlisted time 64.06%  
 16 2. after April 1975, prior enlisted service 8.33%  
 36 3. before April 1975, no prior enlisted time 18.75%  
 14 4. before April 1975, no prior enlisted service 7.29%

**192 H. What is your year group? (Select one)**

11 1. 1973 5.7% 31 4. 1976 16.1% 14 7. 1979 7.9%  
 9 2. 1974 4.6% 46 5. 1977 23.9% 8 8. No Resp  
 33 3. 1975 17.1% 40 6. 1978 20.8% Other  
 4.1%



192 I. What is your parent service? (Select one)

161	1.	USA	83.85%	2	4.	USMC	1.04%
2	2.	USN	1.04%	17	5.	INTERNATIONAL	8.85%
10	3.	USAF	5.2%			OFFICER	

QUESTIONS "J" THROUGH "O" ASK THAT YOU IDENTIFY THE BOOKS YOU HAVE READ ON VIETNAM. LIST THE NUMBER(S) OF THE BOOK(S) READ. IN EACH QUESTION SELECTION "5" WILL BE USED TO INDICATE THAT NONE OF THE BOOK CHOICES FOR THAT GROUP/ QUESTION HAVE BEEN READ. THERE WILL BE BLANK SPACES AT THE CONCLUSION OF QUESTION "O" FOR YOU TO LIST BOOKS NOT FOUND IN QUESTIONS "J" THROUGH "O"

Questions "J" THROUGH "O" will not add up to 192 since respondents were allowed to pick one or more than one.

\_\_\_\_\_ J. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_\_ one).

25	1.	William Westmoreland, <u>A Soldier Reports.</u>
57	2.	Andrew Krepinevich, <u>The Army and Vietnam.</u>
20	3.	Stanley Karnow, <u>Vietnam: A History.</u>
01	4.	Lloyd J. Matthews & Dale E. Brown, editors. <u>Assessing the Vietnam War.</u>
110	5.	I have read none of these books.

\_\_\_\_\_ K. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_\_ one).

5	1.	Robert E. Osgood, <u>Limited War Revisited.</u>
13	2.	Vo Nguyen Giap, <u>The Military Art of People's War.</u>
10	3.	Dave Richard Palmer, <u>The Summons of the Trumpet.</u>
5	4.	Sir Robert Thompson, <u>No Exit From Vietnam.</u>
163	5.	I have read none of these books.

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\_\_\_\_ L. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_ one).

- 14 1. George C. Herring, America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam 1950-1975.
- 2 2. Lawrence E. Grinter and Peter M. Dunn, editors. The American War in Vietnam: Lessons, Legacies, and Implications for Future Conflicts.
- 2 3. Stanley Hoffman, Primacy or World Order: American Foreign Policy Since the Cold War.
- 2 4. Van Tien Dung, Our Great Spring Victory: An Account of the Liberation of South Vietnam
- 172 5. I have read none of these books.

\_\_\_\_ M. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_ one).

- 3 1. U.S. Grant Sharp, Strategy For Defeat.
- 9 2. Guenter Lewy, America in Vietnam.
- 20 3. Michael McLearn, The Ten Thousand Day War, Vietnam
- 4 4. W. Scott Thompson and Donald D. Frizzell, editors The Lessons of Vietnam.
- 161 5. I have read none of these books.

\_\_\_\_ N. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_ one).

- 9 1. Douglas Pike, PAVN: The People's Army of Vietnam.
- 68 2. Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War.
- 7 3. Phillip Davidson, Vietnam At War.
- 11 4. John Schlight, editor. Second Indochina War Symposium: Papers and Commentary
- 105 5. I have read none of these books.

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\_\_\_\_\_ O. Select the number(s) corresponding to the book(s)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ you have read on Vietnam (Select one or more than  
 \_\_\_\_\_ one).

- 1 1. Robert J. O'Neill, General Giap: Politician and Strategist.  
 14 2. Bruce Palmer, Jr., The 25 Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam.  
 3 3. BDM Corporation, A Study of the Lessons Learned in Vietnam.  
 0 4. Stephen T. Hosmer, The Fall of South Vietnam: Statements by Vietnamese Civilian and Military Leaders  
 173 5. I have read none of these books.  
 2 6. Left Blank

LIST BOOKS OR ARTICLES HERE THAT YOU HAVE READ BUT  
 WERE NOT INCLUDED ON THE ABOVE LIST. TOP SIX RESPONSES  
 (see page 276-278)  
 66 survey responses gave 1-9 books (see insert summary)

Left Blank (121) Sheehan, Bright & Shining Lie (11);  
 1. Hackworth, About Face (8)  
 Bernard Fall, Street Without Joy (6);  
 2. Hell in a Very Small Place (5);  
 Left Blank with Caputo, A Rumor of War (2);  
 no readings indicated J-O (51) 3. Dispatches (4)  
 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Left blank with  
 1-3 books read (60)

\_\_\_\_\_ P. Of the authors and books listed on the previous  
 pages of the survey, which would you say has  
 See significantly influenced your views on the  
 pp. "lessons" or "legacy" of Vietnam? [List in order  
 278-9 of greatest (1) to least (3) influence].

- 64 Summers, On Strategy 31; Krepinevich, The Army & VN 9;  
 1. Herring, America's Longest War 4 of 64  
 46  
 2. On Strategy-9; The Army & VN-6; About Face-5 of 46  
 24 Westmoreland Sheehan, Bright &  
 3. On Strategy-7; A Soldier Reports-4; Shining Lie-2  
 90 4. Books have not influenced my views. (Place "4" next  
 to the space to the left of the letter "P".)  
 36 5. Left Blank/No Response

VIETNAM LESSONS SURVEY - 1990 - AFTER (WHITE) PAGE 5

FILL IN THE BLANK. LIST BOOKS OR ARTICLES HERE THAT YOU HAVE READ BUT WERE NOT INCLUDED ON THE ABOVE LIST

( ) Indicates # of books read

1. indicates separate entry from one survey

- (1) 1. A Rumor of War
- (4) 2. Lyndon Johnson's War, Strange Ground (Oral History)  
Green's Comparative Rev Mvts, Numerous books on  
tactical, conventional phase - '65-72
- (3) 3. Anatomy of a War - Komer; Hell in a Very Small  
Place; Street Without Joy
- (2) 4. War Without Windows - Jones; Bright and Shining Lie
- (4) 5. Rumor of War; Dispatches; Ravens; Bat-21
- (2) 6. Hell in a Very Small Place; Dien Bien Phu
- (1) 7. Fire in the Lake
- (3) 8. Structure of U.S. Mission Showing Position of Cords;  
Second Indochina War; Indochina 66-54
- (1) 9. History of Vietnam War (Korean Army)
- (1) 10. Thud Ridge
- (2) 11. Bloods; Air Power in Vietnam
- (2) 12. History of Vietnam - Douglas Pike; Vietnam Crisis -  
Dr. Stephan Pan
- (3) 13. Fall and Liberation of Saigon - Gia Phong; Decent  
Interval; Peace With Honor
- (1) 14. Bright and Shining Lie
- (3) 15. Articles from Bernard Fall books; Street Without  
Joy; Hell in a Very Small Place
- (7) 16. Fields of Fire; Absence of Honor; A Country Such As  
This; The Bridge at Dong Ha; About Face; The Centur-  
ions; Hell in a Very Small Place;
- (4) 17. The Making of a Quagmire; A Bright and Shining Lie;  
Men Against Fire; Fields of Fire
- (4) 18. About Face; A Bright and Shining Lie; Mech Battles  
in Vietnam; Fire Fights in Vietnam
- (2) 19. Fire in the Lake; Pentagon Papers
- (3) 20. Five Years to Freedom; Beyond the Night; C Company
- (1) 21. Born on the 4th of July; Several other personal  
accounts
- (1) 22. Time-Life series
- (1) 23. Don't remember titles (Journals, Newscasts,  
Magazines)
- (1) 24. Readings in P552
- (1) 25. Numerous articles
- (2) 26. Street Without Joy; Articles in army magazine by  
General DuPuy and Colonel Summers
- (2) 27. Dispatches; Platoon Leader
- (2) 28. Bright and Shining Lie; About Face

- (4) 29. Once a Warrior King; Advice and Support; Early Years; Vietnam with Walter Cronkite (A&E series)
- (2) 30. The Early Years; 3 other books that can't recall names
- (1) 31. Street Without Joy
- (1) 32. The Air Force in Three Wars -- Momyer
- (1) 33. Our Endless War -- General Dung
- (2) 34. In general: CBS/NBC/ABC evening newscasts; U.S. News and World Report
- (7) 35. Chickenhawk -- Robert Mason; The Green Beret -- Robin Moore; 365 Days; Platoon Leader -- McDowney; Dispatches -- Kerr; The Killing Zone -- Fred Downs; Once a Warrior King -- David Donovan
- (3) 36. Tunnels of Chu Chi; About Face; Chickenhawk
- (2) 37. About Face; Hamburger Hill
- (2) 38. A Bright and Shining Lie; Infantry in Vietnam
- (3) 39. A Bright and Shining Lie; The Wound Within; The Pentagon Papers
- (5) 40. Born on the 4th of July; A Rumor of War; Platoon Leader; Fields of Fire; America's Longest War
- (1) 41. The Third Valley
- (4) 42. The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia (1961-1973); The Battle for the Skies Over North Vietnam; Aces and Aerial Victories -- The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia (1965-1973); Air Power in Three Wars (WWII, Korea, Vietnam)
- (1) 43. The Big Story -- Peter Braestrup
- (1) 44. DJCO articles
- (1) 45. War in the Shadows
- (1) 46. Crisis in Command
- (3) 47. Ambush; Killing Zone; Bloods
- (2) 48. A Pictorial History of the Vietnam War; Seven Firefights in Vietnam
- (1) 49. A lot of articles from Military Review
- (1) 50. Advise and Support
- (2) 51. About Face; A Bright and Shining Lie
- (1) 52. The Soldier
- (2) 53. Fields of Fire; A Rumor of War
- (11) 54. The Big Story; About Face; Close Quarters; Rise and Fall of an American Army; Fields of Fire; Hamburger Hill; Lamson 719; Rumor of War; Battle for Hue; End of the Line; Elective: American Experience in Vietnam
- (2) 55. A Bright and Shining Lie; The Long Gray Line
- (1) 56. Platoon
- (1) 57. About Face
- (4) 58. The Centurions; Street Without Joy; Hell in a Very Small Place; Green Berets at War
- (6) 59. Street Without Joy; Centurions; Fields of Fire; Dispatches; Our Endless War; Platoon Leader

- (3) 60. The Eastern Offensive; Valley of the Shadow; Into Laos
- (0) 61. Don't read that garbage -- all tainted
- (5) 62. Battles of the Monsoon; In Fields of Bamboo; Ambush; Dispatcher; Human Considerations in Insurgencies
- (13) 63. Dispatches; A Bright and Shining Lie; Platoon Leader; Into Laos; Tet, The Easter Offensive; Battle for Hue; Headhunters; Chickenhawk; The Rise and Fall of an American Army; Hamburger Hill; Once a Warrior King; Mike Force; A Distant Challenge
- (3) 64. A Bright and Shining Lie; The Vietnam Experience series; Numerous articles on media coverage/effects on Vietnam
- (2) 65. Charlie Mike; Fields of Fire
- (3) 66. Limits of Air Power; Rolling Thunder (USAF Cadre Paper); USAF Air War at Sea

QUESTION P - AFTER - Which of the authors and books listed on the previous page of the survey would you say has significantly influenced your views on the "lessons" or "legacy" of Vietnam? LIST IN ORDER OF GREATEST (1) TO LEAST IMPORTANCE (3)

Line 1 (Greatest Influence) 64 entries

- (21) 1. Harry G. Summers, On Strategy, or "Summers" or "On Strategy"
- (9) 2. Andrew F. Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam, or "Krepinevich" or "The Army & Vietnam"
- (4) 3. George C. Herring America's Longest War, or "Herring" or "America's Longest War"
- (3) 4. Stanley Karnow, Vietnam: A History, or "Karnow" or "Vietnam: A History"
- (3) 5. Fall, Street Without Joy or "Street Without Joy"
- (2) 6. Sheehan, Bright and Shining Lie
- (2) 7. Palmer, 25-Year War
- (2) 8. Palmer (unable to tell if Bruce or Dave Richard)
- (2) 9. Pike, PAVN
- (1) 10. Second Indochina War Symposium
- (1) 11. Lewy, America In Vietnam
- (1) 12. VN Crisis - Dr. Stephan Pan
- (1) 13. Decent Interval
- (1) 14. Ten Thousand Day War
- (1) 15. Webb
- (1) 16. Lessons Learned
- (1) 17. Dispatches
- (1) 18. Once A Warrior King
- (1) 19. Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports
- (1) 20. Politician and Strategist - O'Neil
- (1) 21. About Face

- (1) 22. Pentagon Papers
- (1) 23. Limited War Revisited
- (1) 24. The Rise and Fall of an American Army

Line 2 - Second Greatest Influence 46 Entries

- (9) 1. Harry G. Summers, On Strategy or Summers or "On Strategy"
- (6) 2. Andrew Krepinevich, The Army and Vietnam or "Krepinevich" or "The Army in Vietnam"
- (3) 3. Hackworth, About Face
- (3) 4. Karnow, Vietnam: A History or "Karnow"
- (3) 5. Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports
- (2) 6. Herring, America's Longest War or Herring
- (1) 7. Strange Ground - Oral History
- (1) 8. War Without Windows
- (2) 9. The Military Art of People's War
- (1) 10. PAVN: The People's Army of Vietnam
- (1) 11. Pike: A History of The Vietnam War
- (2) 12. Peace With Honor
- (1) 13. The Making of A Quagmire
- (1) 14. Advice And Support
- (1) 15. Our Endless War
- (1) 16. Dispatches
- (1) 17. Braestrup
- (1) 18. War In The Shadows
- (1) 19. Lewy
- (1) 20. Centurions
- (1) 21. Clodfelter, The Limits of Airpower

Line 3 - 3d Greatest Influence - 24 Entries

- (7) 1. Harry Summers, On Strategy or "Summers"
- (4) 2. Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports
- (2) 3. Sheehan, Bright And Shining Lie
- (1) 4. Webb, Fields of Fire
- (1) 5. Fall, Street Without Joy
- (1) 6. The History of The Vietnam War
- (1) 7. Vietnam With Walter Cronkite
- (1) 8. 365 days
- (1) 9. Sharp, Strategy For Defeat
- (1) 10. Hamburger Hill
- (1) 11. The Long Gray Line
- (1) 12. Hell In A Very Small Place
- (1) 13. PAVN
- (1) 14. Palmer

227 Q. Of the authors and works listed in questions "J" through "P" above that you indicated as having read, where did you read them and reflect upon the "lessons" of Vietnam? (Select one or more).

8	1. Officer Basic or Officer Advanced Course.	3.5%
49	2. CGSC Core Curriculum Course (e.g. P511, P118).	21.58%
10	3. CGSC Elective Curriculum (e.g. A694, P558).	4.4%
109	4. Personal initiative for own professional development.	48%
8	5. In units (e.g. at officer classes).	3.52%
9	6. Graduate school: discipline:	3.52%
	MBA, HISTORY, INT'L STUDIES, NAT'L SECURITY STDY	
34	7. Left Blank	14.97%

R. What other sources would you say have significantly influenced your views on Vietnam? If you answer this question with a "3" or "4" response, fill in the blank next to the choice. (Select one or more).

See page 281 for # 3 and # 4

74	1. Senior officers	
25	2. Mentor	
56	3. Other: <u>media (11); father (7); peers/friends/vets</u>	
41	4. professional military education: (4)	
	what school and course: <u>CGSC (10); CGSC-P552 (5);</u>	
39	5. none.	<u>P552 (2)</u>
6	6. Blank	

S. If you answered question R with a 1, 2, 3, or 4 response, did these other sources influence you more than books? (Select one)

104	1. Yes	(54.16%)
42	2. No	(21.8%)
37	3. I answered the previous question with a "5"	(19.2%)
8	4. Blank	(4.16%)
1	5. "equally"	(0.52%)

GO TO NEXT PAGE



QUESTION R - AFTER - Response 3 Fill in the blank -

49 responses

- (20) 1. Media - TV - News Media - Newspapers - Press -  
"Growing Up w/it on TV (1), News Art - Mil Rev (1)  
Documentaries (2)
- (8) 2. Father - Friends - Relatives - Brother - uncle
- (2) 3. Peers
- (1) 4. Study
- (1) 5. CGSC
- (1) 6. Paperback books
- (1) 7. Books not mentioned
- (4) 8. Political science degree, civ education in political  
science, grad school, professors at Boston U
- (1) 9. Enlisted veterans
- (4) 10. Personal experience, service from '67-'71
- (1) 11. Pol discussions in my own country (IO)
- (1) 12. War College Entrance Exam (IO)
- (1) 13. History
- (1) 14. CGSC, IOAC
- (1) 15. films
- (1) 16. articles, documentaries, other lit.

QUESTION "R" Response 4 Fill in the Blank - PME School

- (10) 1. CGSC
- (7) 2. CGSC-P552, CGSC-Counterinsurgency, P552
- (3) 3. CGSC, IOAC, Advanced Course + CGSC
- (3) 4. OAC, IOAC (OPD), IOAC
- (1) 5. Advanced, Basic, CGSC
- (1) 6. Army College (Korean IO)
- (1) 7. Staff College Spain
- (1) 8. War College - Argentina
- (1) 9. USMA History of Revolutionary Warfare
- (1) 10. AF SOS and ACSC Seminar
- (1) 11. Overtime in the Army
- (1) 12. Air Command and Staff College + SOS
- (1) 13. SOS
- (1) 14. CGSC/ACSC/MCESC

199 T. Which statement below comes closest to characterizing your overall views on the "lessons" of Vietnam? (Select one)

- (14)  
7.03%

1. Tactical victory, strategic defeat. The U.S. Army won every battle yet failed to recognize that the true enemy center of gravity was the regular North Vietnamese Army. This North Vietnamese Army eventually led a 22 division assault into South Vietnam in 1975 winning the war.
- (106)  
53.26%

2. The U.S. adopted a conventional, big-unit strategy based on traditional tactical unit operations and firepower that didn't fit the realities of insurgent or revolutionary warfare. By failing to both properly address, and adequately resource the population security and pacification dimensions of the war, the U.S. ignored the political, economic, and social aspects of the struggle.
- (20)  
10.5%

3. The press, Congress, and the civilian leadership of the nation caused the U.S. failure to achieve its objectives in South Vietnam. The press turned a communist defeat during TET (1968) into a strategic victory for the North Vietnamese. The Congress cut both funds and military support (e.g. air cover) off to South Vietnam in the crucial 1972-1975 time frame, sealing the doom of South Vietnam. The civilian leadership, in failing to call up the reserves or remain committed to the war effort, assured victory for North Vietnam.
- (44)  
22.11%

4. The application of U.S. power, military or otherwise (e.g. diplomatic, economic, informational), would never have produced victory in Vietnam regardless of whatever strategy was adopted. Vietnam was inherently beyond the pale of U.S. salvation due to its fractured society, nascent democratic institutions, inept and corrupt leadership, and mandarin-type government by Diem and his followers.

7 Checked more than one response; 6 Left it blank (3.01%)  
and 2 Answered "All 4 questions have merit" (192 + 7 = 199)

GO TO NEXT PAGE

192 U. You view Vietnam as: (Select one) (If you mark response "4" please place a "4" next to the letter "U" and fill in the blank).

- 2 1. a conventional war (1.04%)
- 78 2. a revolutionary war (40.6%)
- 85 3. an all new type of war which combined both a & b (44.27%)
- 24 4. Your own formulation: See page 284 for 24 responses
- 4 5. Left Blank

199 V. You believe that a U.S. ground invasion of North Vietnam: (Select one)

- 27 1. would have carried the war to the enemy's homeland and destroyed his center of gravity--the North Vietnamese Army--ultimately resulting in the defeat of North Vietnam. (13.56%)
- 57 2. would not have worked. The North Vietnamese would have shifted their center of gravity, denying set piece battles to the Americans as they had the French, sought sanctuary in China, and invited the Americans to attempt to seal the North Vietnamese-Chinese border while they infiltrated and launched attacks back into Vietnam. (28.64%)
- 103 3. would have been politically and militarily impossible to do. A ground invasion would have cost the United States too much in terms of an effort which would essentially require the outright occupation of North Vietnam itself, something beyond U.S. military capabilities and U.S. political will at anytime during the war. (51.75%)
- 5 4. No response (2.5%); 7 Multiple responses

GO TO NEXT PAGE

QUESTION "U" "You view the Vietnam War as..." Response 1 was "Conventional War," Response 2 was "Revolutionary War," Response 3 was "Your Own Formulation. The following 24 responses were made in response to selection # 3:

1. All the above plus "Ancient art of war" - Napoleonic Wars to WWII were aberrations.
2. Insurgency which in my mind is different from revolutionary
3. Insurgency lacks broad popular support
4. War of National liberation
5. A combination of 1&2 but not an all new type
6. Communist gov't aggression using conventional, guerrilla terrorist and psychological tactics
7. a mistake
8. a type of war which combined "A and B" ("new" crossed out")
9. A civil war in which the North Vietnamese provided a better idea of the future for Vietnam
10. Insurgency with strong external leadership and support
11. conventional war
12. unintelligible answer (writing bad)
13. low intensity conflict
14. 1 and 2 as a war of independence from external rule (french 1st; US 2d)
15. Essentially a nationalistic war fought using revolutionary war (i.e. Maoist) doctrine
16. Insurgency - U.S. lost it at end of World War II
17. An old type of war that combined "A and B"
18. a war which combined "A and B"
19. 1 & 2, nationalistic
20. Adaption of Maoist thought modified to nationalist struggle
21. Combination of guerrilla war, revolutionary and conventional
22. A Maoist insurgency, moved from level II & III (conventional) and back as situation warranted
23. A mistake
24. LIC - Insurgent (Mao type) with enemy beliefs high. War of cultures led by a few secessionist belief.

192 W. Which of the following statements would come closest to characterizing your views of the 1968 TET offensive? (Select one)

- 25  
(13.02%) 1. The U.S. Army decimated the ranks of the Viet Cong in the 1968 Communist TET Offensive. This essentially destroyed the smoke screen of a guerrilla war as the means by which the communists would achieve victory.
- 127  
(66.14%) 2. The argument about the Viet Cong demise in 1968 is irrelevant. The North Vietnamese never claimed the Viet Cong would win on their own. To focus solely on the Viet Cong's 1968 decimation ignores the North Vietnamese's strategy of synthesizing local, main, and regular forces in pursuit of a long standing political objective--the reunification of all Vietnam under Hanoi.
- 37  
(19.27%) 3. Don't know enough about TET or the Viet Cong to have an opinion.
- 1  
0.52% 4. The TET offensive was a brilliantly executed plan at the strategic level, aimed at the hearts and minds of the U.S. public
5. Left blank (1.04%)

GO TO NEXT PAGE

- \_\_\_\_\_ X. Which of the following statements comes closest to characterizing your views on why the ROLLING THUNDER bombing missions over North Vietnam (March 1965 - October 1968) failed to achieve U.S. objectives? (Select one)
- 47 1. U.S. civilian leaders placed too many restrictions on targets, weapons, and number of sorties flown. (23.38%) These restrictions hamstrung the effectiveness of the bombing campaign.
- 38 2. ROLLING THUNDER proceeded from a fundamentally flawed strategy because the U.S. tried to employ conventional air power on North Vietnam to produce effects on the war in the South. Bombing North Vietnam's rudimentary industrial base and primitive transportation system would never have produced any tangible effects. (18.9%)
- 27 3. Enemy determination was not factored in when considering the effects of bombing. In a culture accustomed to overcoming adversity he quickly reconstructed bridges, filled bomb craters. With little to bomb, the employment of U.S. military means in this fashion would have yielded only minor returns at the margin. (13.43%)
- 25 4. As a practical strategy the bombings actually backfired. American strategists thought that the bombings would raise the threshold of pain, eventually forcing the Vietnamese to capitulate. It did just the opposite. It reinforced North Vietnam's claim to be the legitimate heirs of Vietnamese nationalism while simultaneously undercutting the legitimacy of the South Vietnamese government. (12.4%)
- 53 5. Don't know enough about ROLLING THUNDER to have an opinion. (26.36%)
- 1 6. Stopped for the wrong reasons or you did address all the views on ROLLING THUNDER
- 1 gave no response (0.5%); and 9 checked more than one response.

GO TO NEXT PAGE

- Y. Which of the following statements comes closest to characterizing your views on the effectiveness of the Christmas 1972 bombings (LINEBACKER II) on bringing the North Vietnamese back to the Geneva talks?
- 30 1. The bombing brought the North Vietnamese back to the peace talks in January 1973. This allowed the (15.62%) U.S. to end the war, and to get its POWs back.
  - 57 2. The question poses a false measure of effectiveness. The bombings created a false illusion of (29.68%) victory by bringing the North Vietnamese back to the conference table. In 1965, American demands had been that North Vietnam withdraw all of its troops from the South. In 1973, no such condition was part of the final peace accords.
  - 103 3. Don't know enough about the December 1972 LINEBACKER II bombing campaign to have a definite (53.64%) opinion.
  - 2 4. Left blank (1.04%)
2. Given your assessment of the current world situation (especially the revolutionary events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union--while also keeping an eye on what is going on in Africa, the Middle East, and South America), do you think what happened to the U.S. military in Vietnam is:
- 166 1. relevant (86.4%)
  - 18 2. not relevant (9.3%)
  - 7 left blank (3.6%); 1 didn't understand question (0.5%)

GO TO NEXT PAGE

AA. Do you feel that Vietnam's legacy would play a role in, or influence, your decision-making as you advance to more senior positions of leadership in the USA/USN/USMC/USAF or your own service in your country? (Select one)

- 2  
(1.02%) 1. NO. Vietnam has no relevancy for the future. Vietnam's circumstances were so unique that we won't see anything like it ever again. The post-containment world will reinforce Vietnam's irrelevancy.
- 111  
(56.63%) 2. YES. With the Soviet threat now diminishing, U.S. attention will now shift, focusing more on Third World military challenges, thus making Vietnam relevant. Our experience in Vietnam will have some degree of relevancy when constructing national strategies to deal with revolutionary or insurgent challenges to U.S. interests in the Third World.
- 74  
(37.75%) 3. MIXED BAG. Vietnam will have some degree of influence no matter what. You see it get cited in policy debates constantly, as when military assistance for El Salvador comes up or when the U.S. contemplates intervention somewhere in the world. However, despite this type of influence, it isn't pervasive.
- 3  
(1.53%) 4. Vietnam shouldn't be allowed to have any influence. Any "lesson" drawn from the past for the purpose of application to the present should be highly suspect and highly contingent upon the precise circumstances of the situation at hand.  
1 left blank

AB. In your opinion, who was the most formidable enemy the U.S. faced during the 20th Century? (Select one)

- 35 1. The armies of Nazi Germany (1941-1945) (18.22%)
- 21 2. The armies of Imperial Japan (1941-1945) (10.9%)
- 5 3. The North Korean Army (1950-1953) (2.6%)
- 7 4. The Viet Cong (1960-1968) (3.6%)
- 5 5. The North Vietnamese Army (1965-1972) (2.6%)
- 25 6. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army (13.02%)
- 89 7. The Soviet/Warsaw Pact Armies (1949-present) 46%  
4 Left blank (2.08%);



- 192 AC. Which statement below comes closest to describing your professional judgment about the U.S. Army's doctrinal ability to address the entire spectrum of conflict as expressed in FM 100-5?
- 45 1. FM 100-5, the Army's capstone doctrinal manual, (23.43%) is currently adequate and provides a unifying concept for how the U.S. Army must deal with future conflicts. FM 100-5 adequately covers the full spectrum of warfare from low-intensity conflict through middle-intensity conflict to high-intensity conflict. Specific doctrinal guidance for the conduct of low-intensity conflict is properly located in a separate field manual (FM 100-20).
- 120 2. FM 100-5 does not adequately address the entire (62.5%) spectrum of warfare and focuses heavily on the middle to high-intensity conflict expected on the central European plain. FM 100-5, in its current form, does not adequately cover the more probable low-intensity conflict threats to U.S. national interests. Separation of warfighting doctrine between FM 100-5 and FM 100-20 (Low-Intensity Conflict) has a tendency to artificially divide the warfighting spectrum.
- 24 3. I have no opinion about FM 100-5. (12.5%)
- 3 Left blank (1.56%)

GO TO NEXT PAGE

PLEASE REFER BACK TO YOUR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS "T" THROUGH "AC" WHEN ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS.

192 AD. Have you had a recent significant change in attitude or opinion in relation to any of the responses you indicated for questions "T" through "AC"?

55 1. Yes 28.6%

128 2. No 66.66% 3. Left Blank 4.68%

AE. If you answered question "AD" affirmatively, please indicate the source to which you attribute your change in attitude or views. If you choose responses "1" or "2" fill in the blank below in addition to entering the number next to the space to the left of the letters "AE".

43 1. CGSC Course: (Indicate course #) P552(25); P511 + P552(6)

6 2. Other source: Book - Limits of Airpower, Articles speeches, school, readings, discussions

13 3. Own reading or research outside of CGSC course work.

9 4. Discussions with CGSC classmates outside of CGSC course work.

128 5. I have had no significant change in attitude (I checked the previous question "AD" as "NO").

CEASE WORK AND RETURN THE SURVEY AS PER INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED TO YOU IN CLASS. CHECK TO ASSURE THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED ALL YOUR RESPONSES.

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your participation and support.

One extended comment to Question AE: P552  
Insurgency/CounterInsurgency course 6; P118  
Tactics in CGSC founded on mid high-intensity;  
insurgency course not receiving enough time or emphasis

OTHER RESPONSES/FILL IN THE BLANKS TO QUESTION AE #1

Core Classes (1); Vietnam elective (1); P552/A695 (1);  
P552/A558 (1); P552 (1); P118 (1); P511 (1);  
P511, 552, 118 (1); P552, 118, 911 (1)

**APPENDIX 2**

## APPENDIX 2

### HISTORY OF U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES IN VIETNAM

<u>Policy Statement/Document and Date</u>	<u>Policy Statement</u>
NSC 64            27 Feb 1950	If Indochina fell to communism, the neighboring countries of Burma and Thailand could be expected to fall and the remainder of SE Asia would be in grave hazard.
NSC 5429/2       18 Aug 1954	To make every effort not openly inconsistent with U.S. position at Geneva to defeat communist subversion and influence, to maintain and support non-communist governments in Cambodia, Laos, and what had become South Vietnam, and to prevent Communists from gaining control through elections.
NSC 5612/1       30 Aug 1956	To strengthen Vietnam economically and militarily to assert an increasingly attractive contrast to North Vietnam. This will be done in order to bring about the peaceful reunification to a free and independent South Vietnam functioning in a secure environment.
MACV Mission Statement            Jan 1962	To assist the Government of South Vietnam and its armed forces to defeat externally directed and supported communist subversion and aggression and to attain an independent South Vietnam functioning in a secure environment.
Washington- Saigon Cable        24 Aug 1963	Cable gives Diem opportunity to rid himself of Nhu. If refused, U.S. must face possibility that Diem himself cannot be preserved. If Diem remained obdurate, U.S. prepared to abandon him.
NSAM 273           26 Nov 1963	President Johnson vows not to let Vietnam go the way of China. NSAM 273 incorporates LBJ's pledge into policy by affirming "the central objective of the United States [is to] assist the people and Government of South Vietnam to win their contest against the externally directed and supported communist conspiracy."

NSAM 288	17 Mar 1964	The essential U.S. goal is the preservation of an independent non-communist South Vietnam.
Gulf of Tonkin Resolution	Aug 1964	President Johnson seeks and gets Gulf of Tonkin resolution on the basis of being able to pursue "full and effective restoration" of the 1954 Geneva Accords and 1962 Laos agreement.
NSAM 314	Sep 1964	United States to be prepared "to respond as appropriate against North Vietnam in the event of an attack on American units or any special North Vietnamese or Viet Cong action against South Vietnam."
Presidential Announcement	13 Feb 1965	President Johnson announces a "measured and limited" bombing program (Rolling Thunder) against North Vietnam. Strikes to be made south of 19th parallel. The goal was to convince North Vietnamese leaders to abandon their support of the insurgency in South Vietnam on the theory that failure to do so would result in an increasing level of punishment.
NSAM 328	2 Apr 1965	Approves continuation of bombing in slowly-rising tempo. Gradual extension of bomb line northward. Other restrictions to be gradually eased.
Presidential Statement	25 Mar 1965	President Johnson declares that U.S., in supporting South Vietnam, sought no more than a return to the essentials of the 1954 Geneva agreements or some other reliable arrangement to guarantee the independence and security of the countries of SE Asia. States on 6 Apr 1965 that U.S. prepared at any time for "unconditional discussions." On 17 April 1965 at Johns Hopkins LBJ states that U.S. is in South Vietnam "because we have promises to keep."
NSDM 9	1 Apr 1969	Richard M. Nixon orders U.S. negotiation policy to be based on an insistence on mutual withdrawal of North Vietnamese and American troops with adequate inspection procedures. RVN directs a major step-up in preparing the South Vietnamese military forces to stand alone (Vietnamization). He further ordered a specific timetable for a progressive withdrawal of U.S. troops no matter if progress made or not at Paris negotiations.

Presidential 14 May 1969  
Statement

Nixon, in a televised address, declared that the U.S. did not seek to impose "a purely military solution" on the battlefield and would accept any government (although not explicitly stated, not necessarily non-communist) resulting from the "free choice" of the South Vietnamese people.

Presidential Spring 1971  
Statement

Nixon stated "The one irreducible objective was the opportunity for the South Vietnamese people to determine their own political future without outside interference."

Sources:

George C. Herring, America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam 1950-1975 2d ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1986).

Stanley Karnow, Vietnam: A History (New York: Viking, 1983)

Charles B. MacDonald, Special Report: An Outline History of U.S. Policy Toward Vietnam (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1978).

### **APPENDIX 3**



APPENDIX 3 CAREER LONG PROFESSIONAL READING PROGRAM FOR ARMY OFFICERS

I. PHASE ONE - BETWEEN OFFICERS BASIC AND ADVANCED COURSES

- A. Normal Time Between Courses = 3 years or 36 months
- B. Professional Reading Load = 18 books/  
1 per every 2 months
- C. Responsible for Monitoring: Branch Schools
- D. Reading Program:

History

1. Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army 2d ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
2. Russell F. Weigley, The American Way of War, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.
3. Robert A. Doughty, The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76, Leavenworth Papers No. 1, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1979.
4. Paul H. Herbert, Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. Dupuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations, Leavenworth Papers No. 16, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1988.
5. John Keegan, The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt Waterloo and the Somme, New York: Viking, 1976.
6. John Keegan, The Mask of Command, New York: Penguin, 1987.
7. George C. Herring, America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam 1950-1975, 2d ed., New York: Knopf, 1986.
8. One book to be designated by branch school

## Doctrine

9. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-1  
The Army (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1986)
10. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5  
Operations (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1986)
11. U.S. Department of the Army, U.S. Department of the  
Air Force, Field Manual (FM) 100-20/Air Force Manual  
(AFM 20-2) Low Intensity Conflict (Washington, D.C.  
GPO, 1989)
12. Doctrinal readings designated by branch schools.

## Military Theory - Theory of War

13. Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Translated by Samuel B.  
Griffith. New York: Oxford University Press, c1963.
14. Thucydides. The Peloponnesian War. Rev. ed. Translated  
by Rex Warner. New York: Penguin Books, 1954.
15. Vegetius, The Military Institutions of the Romans,  
Translated by LT. John Clarke, in the Roots of  
Strategy, book I, edited by BG T.R. Phillips  
(Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1985).

## Strategy

16. Karl von Clausewitz, On War, Translated and Edited by  
Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton:  
Princeton University Press, 1976. Book II:  
Chapter 1, Book III Chapters 1-4. (16 pages)

The White House, The National Security Strategy  
of the United States, Washington, D.C. GPO, 1990.  
(32 pages)

Thomas A. Savoie, "America's Strategic Character"  
Military Review 66 (April 1986) : 14-21.

Steven Metz, "Why Aren't Americans Better At  
Strategy?" Military Review 69 (May 1989) : 9-15.

Carnes Lord, "American Strategic Culture,"  
Comparative Strategy Volume 5, No. 3, 1985.

## Policy

17. Seyom Brown, The Faces of Power: Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy from Truman to Reagan, New York: Colombia University Press, 1983.
18. Book designated by Combat Studies Institute or Department of Joint and Combined Operations, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth

## II. PHASE TWO - DURING OFFICERS' ADVANCED COURSE

- A. Time Spent in Officers' Advanced Course = 6 months
- B. Professional Reading Load = 3 books / 1 book every 2 months
- C. Responsible for monitoring: Branch schools
- E. Reading program:

## History

1. Chaim Herzog, The Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East, New York: Random House, 1982.
2. Roland H. Spector, Advice and Support the Early Years The U.S. Army in Vietnam, Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1983.

## Theory

1. Robert C. Tucker, ed. The Lenin Anthology, New York: Horton, 1975.

### Read selected essays

- a. Introduction: Lenin and Revolution pp. xxv-xiv
- b. "What Is to Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement" pp. 12-114
- c. "Socialism and War" pp. 183-195
- d. "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" pp. 204-292
- e. "On Revolutionary Violence and Terror" pp. 423-432

III. PHASE THREE - DURING COMBINED ARMS AND SERVICES  
STAFF SCHOOL (CAS3)

- A. Time Spent in CAS3 = 2 months
- B. Professional Reading Load = 1 book / 1 book every  
2 months
- C. Responsible for monitoring: CAS3
- E. Reading program:

Theory

1. Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968.

IV. PHASE FOUR - BETWEEN OFFICERS ADVANCED COURSE  
AND INTERMEDIATE SERVICE SCHOOLING

- A. Minimum Time Between Courses = 5 years or  
60 months
- B. Professional Reading Load = 30 books/  
1 per every two months
- C. Responsible for Monitoring: School of  
Corresponding Studies, Command and General Staff  
College.
- D. Reading Program:

History

1. Arther Ferrill, The Origins of War: From the Stone Age to Alexander the Great. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1985.
2. Sir Frank Ezra Adcock, The Greek and Macedonian Art of War. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.
3. Edward N. Luttwak, The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
4. Philippe Contamine, War in The Middle Ages. New York: B. Blackwell, 1984.

5. Christopher Duffy, The Military Life of Frederick the Great, New York: Atheneum, 1986.
6. Gunther Erich Rothenberg, The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.
7. Edward J. Stackpole, They Met at Gettysburg, Harrisburg: Stackpole, 1956.
8. Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983.
9. Michael E. Howard, The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, New York: Macmillan, 1961.
10. Thomas Pakenham, The Boer War, New York: Random House, 1979.
11. James L. Stokesbury, A Short History of World War I, New York: William Morrow and Co., 1981.
12. Steven E. Miller ed., Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War: An International Security Reader, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
13. Robert A. Doughty, The Seeds of Disaster: The Development of French Army Doctrine, 1919-1939. Hamden: Archon Books, 1985.
14. Kent Robert Greenfield, ed. Command Decisions, Washington, D.C. Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1960.
15. Ronald H. Spector, Eagle Against the Sun: The American War With Japan. New York: Free Press, 1985.
16. James L. Stokesbury, A Short History of World War II, New York: Morrow, 1980.
17. Clay Blair, The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953, New York: anchor Press, 1987.

## Doctrine

18. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 2 Unified Action Armed Forces, Washington, D.C. : GPO, 1986.
19. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 3-0 Test Pub Doctrine for Unified and Joint Operations Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1990.

## Military Theory - Theory of War and Strategy

20. Jomini, Henri, Baron. Jomini and His Summary of the Art of War: A Condensed Version. Edited by J.D. Hittle Harrisburg: Military Services Publishing Company., 1947.
21. von Clausewitz, Karl, On War, Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.
22. Michael Howard, Clausewitz, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
23. B. H. Liddell Hart, Strategy, New York: New American Library, 1974.
24. Andre Beaufre, An Introduction to Strategy, New York: Praeger, 1965.

## Policy - Foreign Policy

25. Andrew J. Bacevich and others, American Military Policy in Small Wars: The Case of El Salvador, Cambridge, MA: Pergammon-Brassey's International, 1988.
26. Stanley Hoffman, Primacy or World Order: American Foreign Policy Since the Cold War, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978.
27. Robert E. Osgood, Limited War Revisited, Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1979.
28. Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, National Security: Ethics, Strategy, and Politics: A Layman's Primer, Cambridge, MA: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1986.
29. Henry A. Kissinger, American Foreign Policy, New York: Norton, 1974.

30. Harry G. Summers, Jr. On Strategy, Carlisle Barracks PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1981. To be read concurrently with Andrew J. Krepinevich, Jr., The Army and Vietnam, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

V. PHASE V - PROFESSIONAL READING PROGRAM DURING INTERMEDIATE SERVICE SCHOOL

- A. Time Spent in Courses = 11 months
- B. Professional Reading Load = 6 books/  
1 every two months
- C. Responsible for Monitoring: Command and General Staff College.
- D. Reading Program:

History

1. Jeffrey J. Clarke, Advice and Support: The Final Years, Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988).
2. Douglas Pike, PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam, San Francisco, Presidio Press, 1986
3. Ernest R. May, "Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy New York: Oxford University Press, 1973

Doctrine (Omitted due to courses focus on doctrine)

Theory

4. Bernard Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959.
5. Bernard Brodie, War and Politics. New York: Macmillan, 1973.

Policy - Foreign Policy

6. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "Beyond the Cold War," Foreign Affairs 69 (America and the World 1989/90 Edition) : 1-16.

McGeorge Bundy, "From Cold War Toward Trusting Peace,"  
Foreign Affairs 69 (America and the World  
1989/90 Edition) : 197-212.

More reading from current editions of Foreign Policy  
and Foreign Affairs published within a year of  
students' attendance at intermediate service school  
that treat U.S. foreign policy in relation to regional  
and global issues.

VI. PHASE SIX - BETWEEN INTERMEDIATE SERVICE SCHOOLING  
AND SENIOR SERVICE COLLEGE

- A. Minimum Time Between Courses = 5 years or  
60 months
- B. Professional Reading Load = 30 books/  
1 per every two months
- C. Responsible for Monitoring: U.S. Army War  
College.
- D. Reading Program:

History

- 1-4. Forrest C. Pogue, George C. Marshall, 4 vols.  
New York: Viking, 1963-1987.
- 5-6. Martin Blumenson, The Patton Papers, 2 vols.  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972-1974.
- 7. Anthony J. Trythall, 'Boney Fuller: Soldier,  
Strategist, and Writer, 1878-1966.
- 8. Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great  
Powers: Economic Change and Military Con-  
flict From 1500 to 2000, New York: Random  
House, 1987.
- 9-11. William Manchester, The Last Lion: Winston  
Spencer Churchill, 3 vols. New York: Dell,  
1983-1989.
- 12. Russell F. Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants:  
The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-45  
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981.



13. Douglas S. Blaufarb, The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present, New York: Free Press, 1977.

#### Doctrine

- 13-18. The War College should require a reading of all emerging joint doctrine, to include a focus on joint campaign planning. This would include whatever interpretive and analytical literature published in professional military journals which critiques joint doctrinal development.

#### Theory - Theory of War - Strategy

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